



For the Strength of Parents

Helping Teens Follow Prophets: Media, Texting, Facebook, & Friends

A Warning from Prophets

“Sadly, some young men and women in the Church today ignore “things as they really are” and neglect eternal relationships for **digital distractions, diversions, and detours that have no lasting value.** My heart aches when a young couple—sealed together in the house of the Lord for time and for all eternity by the power of the holy **priesthood—experiences marital difficulties because of the addicting effect of excessive video gaming or online socializing.** A young man or woman may waste countless hours, postpone or forfeit vocational or academic achievement, and ultimately sacrifice cherished human relationships because of **mind- and spirit-numbing video and online games.** As the Lord declared, “Wherefore, I give unto them a commandment ... : Thou shalt not idle away thy time, neither shalt thou bury thy talent that it may not be known” ([D&C 60:13](#)).

A Warning from Prophets

“Today I raise an apostolic voice of warning about the **potentially stifling, suffocating, suppressing, and constraining impact of some kinds of cyberspace interactions and experiences upon our souls. The concerns I raise are not new; they apply equally to other types of media, such as television, movies, and music.** But in a cyber world, these challenges are more pervasive and intense. **I plead with you to beware of the sense-dulling and spiritually destructive influence of cyberspace technologies that are used to produce high fidelity and that promote degrading and evil purposes.**

A Warning from Prophets

“If the adversary cannot entice us to misuse our physical bodies, then one of his most potent tactics is to beguile you and me as embodied spirits to **disconnect gradually and physically from things as they really are. In essence, he encourages us to think and act as if we were in our premortal, unembodied state.** And, if we let him, he can cunningly employ some aspects of modern technology to accomplish his purposes. **Please be careful of becoming so immersed and engrossed in pixels, texting, ear buds, twittering, online social networking, and potentially addictive uses of media and the Internet that you fail to recognize the importance of your physical body and miss the richness of person-to-person communication.** Beware of digital displays and data in many forms of computer-mediated interaction that can displace the full range of physical capacity and experience.

A Warning from Prophets

“An immature or misguided spouse may devote an inordinate amount of time to playing video games, chatting online, or in other ways allowing the digital to dominate things as they really are. Initially the investment of time may seem relatively harmless, rationalized as a few minutes of needed relief from the demands of a hectic daily schedule. But important opportunities are missed for developing and improving interpersonal skills, for laughing and crying together, and for creating a rich and enduring bond of emotional intimacy. Progressively, seemingly innocent entertainment can become a form of pernicious enslavement.

“To feel the warmth of a tender hug from an eternal companion or to see the sincerity in the eyes of another person as testimony is shared—all of these things experienced as they really are through the instrument of our physical body—could be sacrificed for a high fidelity fantasy that has no lasting value. If you and I are not vigilant, we can become “past feeling” ([1 Nephi 17:45](#)), as did Laman and Lemuel long ago” (Elder David A. Bednar, “Things as They Really Are,” CES Fireside, May 3rd, 2009, BYU Idaho, Internet Transcript).

If We Don’t Listen to the Prophets, Then Why Have Them?

Elder Harold B. Lee said, “Every soul today that is not hearkening unto the ... inspired counsel that comes from the [Lord’s] leaders is being deceived by the power of Satan, and they are gradually coming to be in his power.... Satan never goes on vacation. He never sleeps” (Harold B. Lee, *Children’s Friend*, June 1949, 254-255).



We Must Even Eat the Spinach!

“This is a hard but necessary dimension of the doctrine about living prophets, and each in his circumstantial turn will need to be tested to see if he really subscribes to it. Our relationship to living prophets is *not* one in which their sayings are a smorgasbord from which we may take only that which pleases us. We are to partake of all that is placed before us, including the spinach, and to leave a clean plate!” (Neal A. Maxwell, *Things As They Really Are* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978], 74).

What is the Spinach for our Youth?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Be in Full Harmony with the Savior

“I do not believe members of this church can be in full harmony with the Savior without sustaining his living prophet on the earth, the President of the Church. If we do not sustain the living prophet, whoever he may be, we die spiritually” (James E. Faust, *Ensign*, November 1989, 9).



What We Need Today...Listening Ears

“What we need today is not more prophets. We have the prophets. But what we need is more people with listening ears. That is the great need of our generation” (J. Rueben Clark, Jr. CR, October 1948, 82).

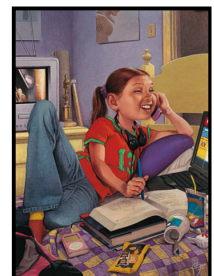


Canaries in the Mine

“I have been in a few mines as a visitor. It is interesting that even visitors receive safety training and are equipped with safety equipment before entering the mine. Modern mines have devices to monitor air quality so that if there is a problem, the miners have some warning and can quickly leave the mine. Before modern monitoring systems were developed, miners used to take canaries down into the mines with them. Canaries are more susceptible to the poisonous gases and would be asphyxiated before the miners were affected. If the canary died, the miners knew to get out of there. It was a type of early warning system” (Elder Paul V. Johnson, Reference, *The Dangers of Priestcraft*, CES Symposium).

A Few Canaries Among Our Youth

1. Teens and cell phones
2. MySpace/Facebook
3. Late Night Culture
4. Media
5. Friends



Going to Heck in a Hand basket



“You cannot allow teenagers who don’t have a clue about life make decisions that will destroy their lives... You cannot allow your children to go to hell under your watch” (Elder Blake Sonne, 5th Quorum of the Seventy, Family Together Forever Parenting Conference, Tupelo Mississippi Stake, February 2006).

Problem #1: Teens and Cell Phones

- Teenagers and cell phones are often not a good combination.
- My wife and I can tell you from first hand experience. Our last cell phone bill was more than our first house payment.
- Thankfully, our children have jobs, and they get to contribute to the bill.
- But there are many reasons why parents must monitor the use of cell phones with their teenagers.
- **Overall a teenagers cell phone ranked 2nd only to clothing, in determining their social status.**



- **Roughly 60 percent of American teenagers own a cell phone, according to U.S. Cellular statistics, and spend an average of an hour a day talking on them—about the same amount of time the average teenager spends doing homework.** And cell phone companies are now marketing to younger children with colorful kid-friendly phones and easy-to-use features. According to market research firm the Yankee Group, 54 percent of 8 to 12 year olds will have cell phones within the next three years.



- According to C & R Research,
 - 22% of children between 6-9 own cell phones
 - 60% of “tweeners” (10-14) own cell phones
 - 84% of teens between 15-18 own cell phones

The Upside to Cell Phones

Health and Wellness Help: Programs that deliver personalized text messages that help a person with dieting, remembering to take medications, or encouraging them to quit smoking are gaining in popularity. For instance, one company is exploring the ability to send photos of what you are eating via your phone’s camera so you can communicate with a nutrition advisor about that food.

Safety: The benefits of cell phones in emergency situations is undisputed. [The Pew Internet & American Life Project](#) found that 74 percent of Americans say they’ve used a cell phone in an emergency. In addition, some emergency agencies are encouraging cell phone users to put “ICE” (in case of emergency) in front of names of people in your cell phone directory whom emergency personal should call in case of an emergency. New phones using GPS technology allow parents to track the location of a phone and thus, hopefully, their child.

Convenience: No one can argue the convenience of being able to reach your child immediately, or a child being able to reach his parent, in the case of a sudden change of plans. Also, the [Pew Internet & American Life Project](#) reports that approximately 41 percent of cell phone users say they multitask by making phone calls while commuting or waiting – a time-saving option almost unheard of 10 years ago.

The Downsides of Cell Phones

• Health Risks

Mental health: [Another study](#) looked at addictive, problematic use of cell phones and found a link between low self-esteem and problem cell phone use. A study measuring the link between cell phones and mental health found that teens who used cell phones the most were more likely to be anxious and depressed.

- **Bullying:** Text messaging is increasing used by bullies to torment their victims. Cyberbullying, psychological harassment in text or instant messaging, is more often perpetrated by girls, who initiate inappropriate messages or spread damaging gossip.
- **Eye strain and “digital thumb”:** Just like other repetitive strain injuries that can result from computer use and other repetitive tasks, these conditions can result from focusing continually on a small screen and typing on small buttons.
- **Bacteria:** Because of the close proximity to the mouth where germs can be passed from breathing, coughing and sneezing, most cell phones are crawling with bacteria. Additionally, many people use their phone everywhere, even in the bathroom.
- **Lack of sleep:** [One study](#) found that some teen cell phone users are likely to be woken at night by incoming text messages or calls, and are therefore more likely to be tired and less able to focus throughout the day.

The Downside of Cell Phones

- **Dependence:** [One study](#) finds that 37 percent of teens felt they wouldn’t be able to live without a cell phone once they had it. This study also shows that the more friends a teen has, the more likely they are to feel dependent on their phone and let calls or text messages interfere with their daily schedule.

Dishonesty: [The Pew Internet & American Life Project](#) found that 39 percent of cell users ages 18-29 say they are not always truthful about where they are when they are on the phone.

Expense: Parents often experience sticker shock when they receive the bill for their child’s cell phone. Special ring tones, text, picture and video messaging, downloadable games, overage minutes and connecting to the Internet can all be very expensive and heavily used by teens.

Cell Phones and School



Just because kids are in school doesn't mean their phones are turned off. **Thirty-eight percent of teens surveyed text-message with friends during school hours.** A smaller 30 percent of students say they play video games on their phones while at school. Parents who look at their kid's calls will realize **26 percent of kids speak with people mom and dad wouldn't approve of.**

Teens Are Texting Fools

- In 2001, only about 2 percent of U.S. residents used text messaging. But texting took off in the last few years as mobile carriers such as Verizon and AT&T debuted pricing plans that permitted unlimited text messaging.
- American teenagers sent and received an average of 2,272 text messages per month in the fourth quarter of 2008. That averages out to about 80 messages a day, which is more than double the average from last year.
- **That number is spurring concern for some local doctors, who think texting is causing anxiety, sleep loss, distraction in school, falling grades and repetitive stress injury among youngsters.**
- Allyson Havill, an assistant professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing and a psychotherapist in private practice, has seen the effects firsthand.
- **"Teens are starting to bring up texting in therapy sessions as measures of social standing," Dr. Havill said. "It can have positive or negative effect on self-esteem."**
- On one hand, texting helps teens feel socially connected and lets them share their experiences instantly, leading to a boost in self-esteem. On the other hand, if teens feel left out or disconnected, texting can lead to anxiety and feelings of sadness.
- **Many teens stay up most of the night texting each other!!**

Cell Phones and Teen Socialization

- **The cell phone has become a primary mode of socializing for teens and they will often avoid contact with peers** that don't have cell phones, according to a study by **Context**. The Baltimore company uses anthropologists to study consumer trends.
- "Next time a teenager says, 'Mom if I don't have a phone,' or 'Dad, if I don't have a phone, I'm going to be a nobody,' they are being serious," said Robbie Blinkoff, Context's principal anthropologist.

The Selfish Cell Phone Culture

- Cell Phone Culture is a selfish, individual culture.
- Unlike when we were teenagers, and when you went to call someone of the opposite sex, or a friend— everyone was listening.
- Today, kids are talking out in the driveway, in the car, out in the back yard— and parents have no idea who they are talking to, or what they are saying.
- Rudeness; phone calls during dinner; phone calls in social situations, phone calls at 3:00 a.m., text messaging during church, and during class.



Negative Effects of Texting



- According to data from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, **cell-phone-related car accidents shot up by 43 percent in Western Pennsylvania between 2003 and 2006.**
- **Moreover, almost 50 percent of drivers between the ages of 18 and 24 have admitted to texting or sending an e-mail or instant messages while driving,** according to a survey by www.findlaw.com, a legal information site.
- Among other negative effects of texting, a recent British study reported that one in six texters between 16 and 24 experiences pain in the hands when texting. Fletcher thinks these concerns may be overblown.
- While students may not always suffer physically, their grades might. **Bove reports seeing a correlation between drops in grades and the number of times she catches a student texting.**

Parents, Monitor Cell Phone Use

- **Have your children turn the phone in each night before bed.**
- Now with easy **pornography** download capability— be aware!
- Perhaps using the phone for emergencies rather than convenience
- **Monitor minutes and who they are talking to.**
- Have some ground rules: 1) Don't need it during church [text messaging during church meetings, 2) Who they can call, 3) who they give their numbers to, 4) limit minutes
- **Discuss appropriate circumstances, places and uses for cell phones with your child:** 82 percent of people report having been annoyed by loud or personal cell phone conversations in public. Don't let your child be one of these irritants.

Problem #2: Online Social Networks

- Be ware of MySpace, Facebook, Xanga
- My Space is a garbage site.
- If your children have a Myspace account, you need to find out, and delete it!

MySpace

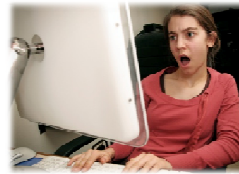
- On this site, youth are exposed to lewdness, pornography, sex talk
- Over 100 million people currently have a MySpace account, and the site attracts more than 4% of all internet traffic daily.
- If your child has hours to spend on this website, your child has way too much time on their hands



Teens and the Internet

- Teens have established significant presence on social networking web pages: **61% of 13- to 17-year-olds have a personal profile** on a site such as MySpace, Friendster, or Xanga. Half have also posted pictures of themselves online.
 - Older teens (16-17s) and girls especially use the Internet for social interaction, meeting friends, and networking.
- However, many have also been exposed to the Internet's accompanying potential risks.
 - 71% reported receiving messages online from someone they don't know.
 - 45% have been asked for personal information by someone they don't know.
 - 30% have considered meeting someone that they've only talked to online
 - 14% have actually met a person face-to-face they've only spoken to over the Internet (9% of 13-15s; 22% of 16-17s).
- When teens receive messages online from someone they don't know, 40% reported that they'll usually reply and chat with that person.
 - Only 18% said they'll tell an adult.

MySpace



Police, call MySpace a predator's buffet. Simultaneous to the meteoric growth of the site is its increasing connection to crimes involving the young, including harassment, rape, molestation and murder.

Dateline Findings

When "Dateline" surfed MySpace, they found scenes of binge drinking, apparent drug use, teens posing in underwear, and other members simulating sex, and in some cases even having it.... Teens listed not only their names, and addresses, but even cell phone numbers and after school schedules.

Self Creation and Deception

"When people join MySpace, they discover a world where they can be whatever and whoever they want to be. Sometimes young people struggling with low self-esteem may tune out friends and family to meet and impress people with an imaginary or exaggerated identity online. Cyber interaction can replace reality for these individuals" (*Internet Guide for Parents*, Family Research Council, Washington, D.C., 10).

Self Deception & the Second Life

“Today a person can enter into a virtual world, such as Second Life, and assume a new identity. An individual can create an avatar, or a cyberspace persona, that conforms to his or her own appearance and behavior. Or a person can concoct a counterfeit identity that does not correlate in any way to things as they really are. However closely the assumed new identity approximates the individual, such behavior is the essence of things as they really are not. Earlier I defined the fidelity of a simulation or model. I now emphasize the importance of personal fidelity—the correspondence between an actual person and an assumed, cyberspace identity” (Elder David A. Bednar, “Things as They Really Are,” CES Fireside, Brigham Young University-Idaho, May 2009).

My Space Facts

Regarding Parents,

- 38% have not seen their teen’s MySpace page and 40% never look at their teen’s MySpace pictures.
- 43% of parents are not sure how many days per week their teenagers they are on MySpace and 36% of parents are not sure how many hours a day they are on MySpace.
- 67% view their teen’s MySpace page less often than every few months.
- 50% allow their teen to have a computer in the bedroom.
- 55% believe MySpace is a fad.
- 33% believe their teen has online friends he/she has never met and 62% have never talked to their teen about MySpace use.
- 83% of teens believe MySpace is safe.

On-Line Safety

- 33% of 13- to- 17-year-olds reported that their parents or guardians know “very little” or “nothing” about what they do on the Internet.
 - 48% of 16-17s said their parents or guardians know “very little” or “nothing”
- Fully 22% of those surveyed reported their parents or guardians have never discussed Internet safety with them.
- On the other hand, 36% of youth—girls and younger teens most notably—said that their parents or guardians have talked to them “a lot” about online safety, and 70% said their parents or guardians have discussed the subject with them during the past year.
- Fewer teens whose families have talked to them “a lot” about online safety have an IM name or pictures of themselves on the Internet, compared to kids whose families have not talked to them at all. More teens who’ve talked to parents or guardians also ignore messages from unfamiliar people, refuse to reply or chat, block unknown senders, and report these occurrences to trusted adults.

Problem #3: Teens and Bedtime

- According to the American Sleep Disorders Association, the average teenager needs around 9.5 hours of sleep per night, possibly because hormones that are critical to growth and sexual maturation are released mostly during slumber. Yet studies show that teenagers generally get an average of only 7.4 hours a night. This is far short of the desired quota for healthy teens.

Teen Sleep Deprivation

- Teen sleep deprivation is associated with information processing and memory deficits, increased irritability, anxiety, and depression, and decreased creativity and ability to handle complex tasks.
 - * **20% of all high school students fall asleep in school.**
 - * **Over half of students report being most alert after 3:00 in the afternoon.**
 - * Additional weekend sleep does not offset the effects of sleep deprivation.
 - * The adolescent’s circadian rhythm means he or she will feel awake later into the evening (through midnight) and unable to fall asleep. (Even if they go to bed at 9:30, they are not likely to fall asleep til after 11:00.)

Late Night Teen Culture

- According to a new pediatric study, **teenagers are often up late at night, drinking caffeinated beverages, texting, playing video games, and using the Internet...all to a point where their performance during the day is suffering.**
- **“They’re up at night and they’re doing a lot less homework than we thought and a lot more multitasking,”** according to Dr. Christina J. Calamaro of Drexel University in Philadelphia, the lead researcher on the study.
- Experts believe that teenagers need at least nine hours of sleep every night, Calamaro and her team note in their report, but the average sleep time for US adolescents is seven hours. The researchers investigated whether teens’ use of technology and caffeinated beverages might affect how much sleep they got at night and how tired they felt during the day by surveying 100 12- to 18-year-olds.

Late Night Teen Culture



- Just one in five of the study participants said they got 8 to 10 hours of sleep a night, and these teens had an average multitasking index of 0.39.
- One third of the study participants said they fell asleep in school, and these teens dozed off an average of twice a day, although some said they fell asleep as many as eight times a day. The higher a child's multitasking index, the more likely he or she was to fall asleep in school.
- The teens' average caffeine consumption was 215 mg daily, or the equivalent of a couple of espressos.

Some Observations

- Many LDS Teenagers attend late night movies and parties
- They are talking on their cell phones after midnight during the school week
- Some attend late night movie showings during their school week
- Many will stay up to 2-3 a.m. playing video games, texting, and on Facebook
- What are these kids possibly worth the next day?
- How do these trends impact their academic performance?

Parents, It's Time to Crack Down!

- So what to do? **Experts warn parents to remove TVs, computers, video games, and yes, even cell phones from teens' bedrooms to remove the temptation to stay up late using them.** In addition, they caution parents to try to prevent consumption of caffeinated beverages after noon in order to help kids to go to sleep at a decent hour.
- **Parents, do you know where your children are?**



Our Minds Are Like Wet Cement



"Our minds are a little bit like wet cement in the sense that whatever we inscribe there is not easily erased. The things we see, think, and hear are apparently permanently embedded in our minds. It follows that we should carefully monitor what we watch or listen to in the media, because the images we see on television or in the movies or what we listen to on the radio or stereo remain permanently filed away, subject to recall" (Randall A. Wright, "Modern Media and Morality," Why Say No When the World Says Yes [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993], 127).

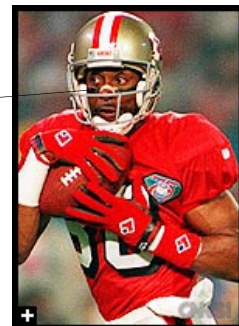
1985: Increase in Fighter Pilots



Problem #4: The Power of Media

NFL Hall of Fame Receiver, Jerry Rice, #80, San Francisco 49's Breath-Right Nose Bandage

CNS makes breath right bandages which supposedly keep people from snoring. They sold 2.7 million in 1994. Then Jerry Rice wore one in the 94 Superbowl. The next year they sold over 70 million



Media Concern #1: Popular Music

- **“Much of the rock music is purposely designed to push immorality”** (President Ezra Taft Benson, *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 322).
- **“Approximately 2,940 more hours are spent listening to music than are spent in school between seventh and twelfth grades”** (Stewart Powell, “What Entertainers Are Doing To Our Kids,” *U.S. News and World Report*, 28 October 1985, 46-49).
- One researcher found that **75 percent of MTV’s music video’s contain sexual themes**. He concluded that “watching rock music video’s is not passive adolescent entertainment; simply watching them can alter viewer’s perceptions of the social world” (C. Hansen, “Priming sex-role stereotypic events schemes with rock music videos,” *Journal of Basic and Applied Psychology*, December 1989, 373-391).

MP3/IPOD Use

Nearly half of music downloader’s own a portable MP3 player (48%), and these owners use their devices an average of **12 hours per week**. Younger downloader’s use their MP3 Players more often (average of over 16 hours per week among teens), but have less digital content stored on their devices. Overall, there is an average of 700 songs or files stored on a U.S. music downloader’s MP3 player.



More on IPods

- A new study by global market research firm Ipsos indicates that as many as **one in five Americans over the age of 12 now own portable MP3 Players and one in 20 own more than one**. And interest in viewing music videos, photos, TV shows and even full-length movies from these devices is especially strong among younger consumers who have experience downloading music.
- **Younger Americans are driving recent growth, with over half of teens now owning a portable MP3 player (54 percent), and one third of 18-34 year olds (30 percent)**. Older Americans are less likely to own these devices overall, but still represent a sizable and consistent presence in the market (13 percent of 35 – 54 year olds report owning a portable MP3 player).
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Media Consumption Among Teens

TV 3 hours, 20 minutes	PC 52 minutes including applications	Mobile Voice 6 minutes	Video on an MP3 Player 1 in 4 watched
DVR 8 minutes	Internet 23 minutes	Text-Messages 96 sent or received	Audio-Only MP3 Player 1 in 2 used
DVD 17 minutes	Online video If they watched, watched 6 minutes	Mobile video If they watched, watched for 13 minutes	Newspaper 1 in 4 read
Console Gaming 25 minutes	PC Games 1 in 10 played, today	Mobile Web 1 in 3 used	Movie Theater Went once in the past 5 weeks

*For directional purposes only, this table estimates daily U.S. teen media use across a variety of platforms based on a range of Nielsen sources from 2008 and Q1 2009. Details of these estimates are contained in the body of this paper.
Source: The Nielsen Company

Do Not Fill Your Mind with Unworthy Music

“Young people, you cannot afford to fill your mind with the unworthy hard music of our day. It is not harmless. It can welcome onto the stage of your mind unworthy thoughts and set the tempo to which they dance and to which you may act?” (Elder Boyd K. Packer, *Conference Report*, October 1973, 25).



If You Really Cared About Someone, would you be willing to have sexual relations before marriage?

Classical	35%
Soft Rock	56%
Top Forty	65%
Country	69%
Punk Rock	71%
Rap	73%
Alternative	80%
Heavy Metal	84%

(As cited in Wright, “Modern Media and Morality,” 131-132).

The Powerful Influence of Music



“Music has a very powerful and wonderful influence in establishing feelings and moods that can lift and elevate your thoughts and your actions. **But because it is so powerful, it is cleverly used by the adversary to stimulate your thoughts, feelings, and moods, to pollute and poison your mind and cause you to do things you would not otherwise consider doing**” (Ardeth Kapp, *Ensign*, November 1990, 94).

Media Concern #2: Television

- The effects on the family are of some concern. *One negative effect of watching television is to decrease communication and interaction among family* (Christopher, Fabes, and Wilson, 1989).
- “Television viewing has a profound effect in the lives of most youth, particularly those who are spending four to five hours a day in front of their sets. The typical high school graduate will have spent almost twice as much time watching television as he has spent in the classroom—the equivalent of ten years of forty-hour weeks” (E.H. Methvin, “TV violence: The shocking new evidence,” *Reader’s Digest*, January 1983, 49-53).
- “National studies have shown that the average American spends four hours a day watching TV or 28 hours weekly. This compares to 1.5 hours per week for working mothers and 62 minutes for fathers per week in quality time with each child” (Randal A. Wright, *A Case for Chastity* [USA: National Family Institute, 1993], 69).

According to a Nielsen Study

- Number of minutes per week that parents spend in meaningful conversation with their children: 3.5
- Number of minutes per week that the average child watches television: 1,680
- Percentage of day care centers that use TV during a typical day: 70
- Percentage of parents who would like to limit their children’s TV watching: 73
- Percentage of 4-6 year-olds who, when asked to choose between watching TV and spending time with their fathers, preferred television: 54
- Hours per year the average American youth spends in school: 900 hours
- Hours per year the average American youth watches television: 1500



Slug Alert

- The average man, woman, & child in the U.S. watches TV 30 hours a week (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1996/1997).
- “By the time the average person reaches 70, he or she will have spent the equivalent of 7 to 10 years of their lives watching television” (see *Children, Adolescents, and Television*, American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Public Education, February 2001).



Television Is Out of Control



“Television is out of control in some homes; the set is rarely turned off, regardless of the programming. Some programs are filthy and evil and are poisoning the minds of God’s children today... Satan has made television and film media among his most effective tools to destroy minds and souls” (Joseph B. Wirthlin, *Ensign*, November 1988, 36).

TV Weakens Spiritual Strength

“One of the ways Satan lessens your effectiveness and weakens your spiritual strength is by encouraging you to spend large blocks of your time doing things that matter very little. I speak of such things as sitting for hours on end watching television or videos, playing video games night in and night out, surfing the Internet, or devoting huge blocks of time to sports, games, or other recreational activities.

“Don’t misunderstand me. These activities are not wrong in and of themselves (unless, of course, you are watching salacious programs or seeking out pornographic images on the Internet)....

“But I speak of letting things get out of balance....

“One devastating effect of idling away our time is that it deflects us from focusing on the things that matter most. Too many people are willing to sit back and let life just happen to them. It takes time to develop the attributes that will help you be a well-balanced person” (Elder M. Russell Ballard, “Be Strong In the Lord,” *Ensign*, July 2004, 13-14).

Can You Name Them?



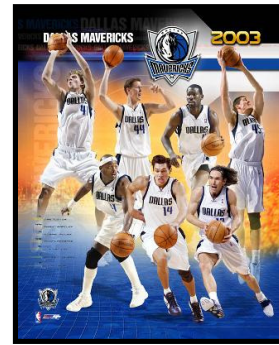
Can You Name Them?



Can You Name Them?



Can You Name Them?



Can You Name Them?



Nice...

- "A study by the American Psychological Association figures that the typical child, watching 27 hours of TV a week, will view 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence from age 3 to age 12" (*U.S. News & World Report*, 11 Sept. 1995, 66).
- Number of murders seen on TV by the time an average child finishes elementary school: 8,000
- Number of violent acts seen on TV by age 18: 200,000
- Percentage of Americans who believe TV violence helps precipitate real life mayhem: 79 (Nielsen Survey).
- "Nearly 70 percent of young children have TVs in their bedrooms today; nearly half [49%] have videogame systems in their bedrooms; 46 percent have VCRs; 37 percent have DVD players; 35 percent have cable or satellite TV service; 24 percent have PCs and 18 percent are hooked up to the Internet in their bedrooms" (Nickelodeon Survey, *The New Normal*, Associated Press, November 20, 2005).

Even Nicer...



“In sample of programming from the 2001-2002 television season, **64% of the shows included sexual content, 32% sexual behavior and 14% featured strong suggestions of sexual intercourse**” (Washington Post, 20 June 2005).

A Strange Paradox

“It seems very strange that we place deadbolt locks on our doors to prevent evil people from entering into our sacred homes and then we turn around and invite the same type of people in through television programming” (Randal A. Wright, *25 Mistakes LDS Parents Make and How to Avoid Them* [National Family Institute, 2006], 66).

See Alma 50:1-10!!



Electronic Media in Bedroom x Willingness to have Premarital Sex

- **No Media** 33%
- **Stereo Only** 49%
- **Television Set** 67%
- **TV/VCR** 71%

The Words of a Prophet



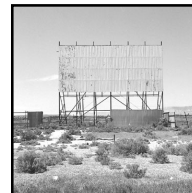
“...I am suggesting that we spend a little less time in idleness, in the fruitless pursuit of watching some inane and empty television programs. Time so utilized can be put to better advantage, and the consequences will be wonderful. Of that I do not hesitate to assure you” (President Gordon B. Hinckley, *CR*, April 1995, 117).

Media Concern #3: Movies

“When 1200 students were asked what kinds of movies they enjoyed viewing, **73 percent favored R-rated films, 22 percent preferred PG-13 movies, 5 percent like PG-rated shows, and 0 percent listed G-rated movies as enjoyable.** Clearly, youthful viewers disdain movies whose content is suitable for all audiences, preferring entertainment that by its rating is guaranteed to portray some measure of sex, violence, and profanity” (Randall A. Wright, “Modern Media and Morality,” *Why Say No When the World Says Yes* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993], 135-136).

Percent of Teenagers Seeing at Least One R-rated Movie:

- Non-LDS Students: 99%
- LDS Students: 92%



Consider Self Very Religious x R-rated Movies:

0-5 R-rated movies	65%
6-15 R-rated movies	43%
16-25 R-rated movies	38%
26+ R-rated movies	24%

Willingness to have Sex x R-Rated Movies:

	LDS	Non LDS
0-5 R-rated movies	4%	19%
6-15 R-rated movies	6%	49%
16-25 R-rated movies	13%	61%
26+ R-rated movies	30%	71%

Premarital Sex is OK

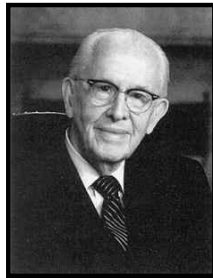
0-5 R-rated movies	25%
6-15 R-rated movies	59%
16-25 R-rated movies	70%
26+ R-rated movies	82%

Parents Have Responsibility

“When parents try to teach their children to avoid danger, it is no answer for parents to say to their children, **‘We are experienced and wise in the ways of the world, and we can get closer to the edge of the cliff than you.’** Parental hypocrisy can make children cynical and unbelieving of what they are taught in the home. For instance, when parents attend movies they forbid their children to see, parental credibility is diminished. If children are expected to be virtuous, parents must be virtuous. If you expect your children to be honorable, you must be honorable” (James E. Faust, CR, October 1990, 41).

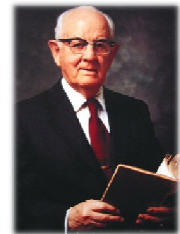
A Prophet Has Spoken

“We counsel you, young men, not to pollute your minds with such degrading matter, for the mind through which this filth passes is never the same afterwards. **Don’t see R-rated movies or vulgar videos or participate in any entertainment that is immoral, suggestive, or pornographic**” (Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, May 1986, 45).



From President Kimball

“The body has power to rid itself of sickening food. That person who entertains filthy stories or pornographic pictures and literature records them in his marvelous computer, the brain, which can’t forget this filth. **Once recorded, it will always remain there, subject to recall**” (Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 283). XR Alma 12:14



Movies & Morality

“A stake president recently told me that never once when he was a bishop, did any youth come to him who had sexually transgressed who had not first viewed movies with sexual content” (Randall A. Wright, “Modern Media and Morality,” *Why Say No When the World Says Yes* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993], 137).



Media Guidelines

1. Parents, know the content of the media your children are exposed to: See www.screenit.com; www.kids-in-mind.com
2. Help your children reject obscene material
3. Help your children understand how they would feel if you, their bishop, our prophet, or the Savior was sitting beside them while they viewed such content.
4. Help children understand that they can avoid that “one bad scene” by avoiding the entire movie.
5. Develop a rating system in your family.
6. Discuss your values with your children: When a Neph stands up to pressure, there is always a Sam that will follow.
7. Use Moroni 7 as a guide
8. Seek Spiritual Guidance in Selecting media:

Media Concern #4: Video Games

- 8.5% of youth gamers are clinically addicted to video games
- 23% of youth say they feel that they have been addicted to gaming and that they play too much
- 44% report that their friends are addicted to video games
- 94% of American young men play video games at least once a month
- The average 8-12 year old boy plays video games 16 hours a week
- The average 13-18 year old young man plays video games 18 hours per week

Problem #5: Friendships

“Have good associates or don’t associate at all. Be careful in the selection of your friends. If in the presence of certain persons you are lifted to nobler heights, you are in good company. But if your friends or associates encourage base thoughts, then you had best leave them” (Ezra Taft Benson, *God, Family, Country*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974], 241).



For the Strength of Youth

“Choose friends carefully. They will greatly influence how you think and act, and even help determine the person you will become. Choose friends who share your values so you can strengthen and encourage each other in living high standards. A true friend will encourage you to be your best self.”



Choose Friends Carefully

“Chose your friends carefully. It is they who will lead you in one direction or the other. Everybody wants friends. Everybody needs friends. No one wishes to be without them. **But never lose sight of the fact that it is your friends who will lead you along the paths that you will follow. While you should be friendly with all people, select with great care those whom you wish to have close to you.** They will be your safeguards in situations where you may vacillate between choices, and you in turn may save them” (President Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, January 2001, 2; emphasis added).

Worst Habits Best Friends

“We pick up our worst habits from our best friends” (H. Burke Peterson, *Area Conference Report*, August 1973, 62).

“...Chose friends who share your standards, both members and nonmembers. Such friends will make peer pressure uplifting and positive” (Elder M. Russell Ballard, *Conference Report*, October 1990, 48).

Children Will Never Go Astray

“Children... will never go astray while they are in good company” (Francis M. Lyman, *CR*, October 1907, 15).



For the Strength of Youth

“To have good friends, be a good friend yourself. Show interest in others and let them know you care about them. Treat everyone with kindness and respect. Go out of your way to be a friend to those who are shy or do not feel included.”



Friends More Influential Than Parents

“In a survey which was made in selected wards and stakes of the Church, we learned a most significant fact. Those persons whose friends married in the temple usually married in the temple, while those persons whose friends did not marry in the temple usually did not marry in the temple. The influence of one’s friends appeared to be a more dominant factor than parental urging, classroom instruction, or proximity to a temple” (President Thomas S. Monson, *CES Fireside for Young Adults*, 6 November 2005, Brigham Young University).

Home Court Advantage

“There’s nothing you can do about the strength of peer influence. It’s part of life. But what you *can* do is be aware of your child’s activities and who her friends are. That means having the peer group over at your home as much as possible. Make your home the hub of activity—the comfortable hang out place. Rent a movie, buy pizza, invest in a good [DVD] player, whatever it takes. If you do, you’ll have home court advantage. It will give you an up-close and personal chance to see who your children are hanging out with. You can also get to know the parents of the children your child hangs out with” (Kevin Leman, *Have A New Kid By Friday*, 206).

Friends with Family

You’ll Be With Them Longer



Parents Should be Friends with Children

“Live close to your children, that you have their love and confidence, that you are not harsh, that you are not cross, that you are understanding. Be firm in the right—yes, in a kindly, sweet way. I pray that the time will never come when your children will go to others for counsel and advice which you should be giving them. If you have a kindly spirit in your homes it is not going to be difficult for you to live the gospel, and it is not going to be difficult for your children to grow up and be true Latter-day Saints as you would have them become” (Ezra Taft Benson, *Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 502).

Children Should be Friends with Family

“We need a closer parent-child relationship. One of the greatest needs of our young people is a closer, more frequent companionship with father and mother....**Your most important friendships should be with your own brothers and sisters and with your father and mother. Love your family. Have a genuine concern for your brothers and sisters.** Help carry their load so you can say, like the lyrics of that song, ‘He ain’t heavy, he’s my brother.’” (President Ezra Taft Benson, *Teachings of President Ezra Taft Benson*, 520; emphasis added).

Friends with Non-Members

“Invite your friends of other faiths to your Church meetings and activities, where they can learn about the gospel. **Help them feel welcomed and wanted. Many people have joined the Church through the example and fellowship of their friends.** Don’t be offended if your friends decline your invitation to learn more about the gospel. Just continue to be their friend.”

What Parents Can Do

1. Teach the importance of good friends
2. Pray for good friends for your children
3. Invite good families over to your home and get to know their families
4. Monitor your children’s friendships
5. Facilitate an atmosphere in your family where your children are best friends
6. Get to know your children’s friends and treat them well.

Make Your Children’s Friends Your Friends

“Open your homes to the friends of your children. If you find they have big appetites, close your eyes and let them eat. **Make your children’s friends your friends**” (President Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, November 2000, 50).



Get to Know the Parents of Your Children’s Friends

“You may need to get together with the parents of your children’s friends and mutually agree on acceptable standards of entertainment, hours, and activities. When discussions about standards are held, either at home or with the neighbors, involve the children as well whenever possible. If they have a part in the decisions made, they will more likely ‘own’ them and be more inclined to live up to them” (Elder Joe J. Christensen, *One Step at a Time: Building a Better Marriage, Family, and You*, 74).

We Have a Prophet

“As a young child, I believed we had a prophet and that he spoke the truth; but I’m not sure I understood that the prophet was speaking to me personally. When I was a young wife and mother, my husband spent two years in the air force. We lived in military housing on Long Island, New York. While tending our young children, I often visited with neighbors who had come from all over the country. One day as a neighbor and I were talking about our beliefs, she became curious about what was different about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We Have a Prophet

I told her briefly about the Restoration, and I explained that the restored Church of Jesus Christ has a living prophet today. This really seemed to pique her interest, and she wanted to know what the prophet had said. As I started to tell her about the Doctrine and Covenants and modern revelation, she said, “But what has he said lately?” I told her about general conference and that the Church had a monthly publication with a message from the prophet. Then she got really interested. I was so embarrassed to admit that I hadn’t read the current message. She concluded our conversation by saying, “You mean you have a living prophet and you don’t know what he said?” In that situation I hadn’t shown what it meant to sustain” (Janette Hales Beckham, “Sustaining the Living Prophets,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 84).