

ENGAGE YOUR FAITH BY...

Romans 12:2

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Your preteen will see and hear songs, words, movies, videos and other things that you wish they hadn't. It is your role to help them live for God and not for likes, followers, high scores or peer approval. There is a delicate balance between protecting them and letting them find their own way. Encourage friendships with kids who will help your child stand firm in their beliefs and who share interests and hobbies. Help them build a peer group that will keep them focused on what is right and pure rather than what is popular and worldly.

RESOURCES...

> Apps

ParentCue • Connect Church and Home
Life360 • Location Tracker

> Web

CommonSenseMedia.org • TV and Movie Ratings
iMom.com • Relatable Topical Parenting and Family Posts
RaisingBoysandGirls.com • Information on Education and Development
DigitalKidsInitiative.com • Resources for Navigating the Digital World
bit.ly/2wYCZFB • Parental Control Software Comparison

> Books

Growing Up Social: Raising Relational Kids in a Screen-Driven World by Gary Chapman, Arlene Pellicane
Disconnected: How To Reconnect Our Digitally Distracted Kids by Tom Kersting
Right Click: Parenting Your Teenager In A Digital Media World by Art Bamford, Kara Powell, Brad M Griffin



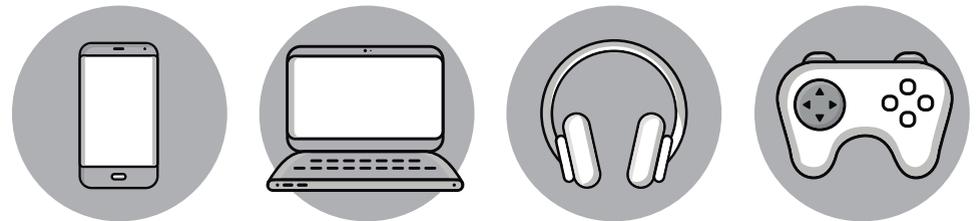
PARENTING *resources*

PARENTING MATTERS: TECHNOLOGY

▢ 4TH & 5TH GRADES ▢

LIFE LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE...

Your child is starting to take big steps toward technology independence. It is likely that they are communicating with friends through a texting app or FaceTime. The odds of them stumbling across inappropriate content is greatly increasing as they begin spending unsupervised time online. They are becoming more capable of understanding what they see and hear. Filters are a great start, but a foundation of open and honest communication is critical as you take on this phase.



YOU CAN HELP GUARD THEIR HEART BY...

KNOW:

Nothing that is said or posted online can ever be erased. Everything done online contributes to a digital footprint (a permanent history of all comments, posts, photos, videos, etc.). Future employers, coaches and colleges are able to evaluate a digital footprint and make decisions based on what they see. Your child likely has no awareness of the permanence and lack of privacy that the internet provides.

EXPECT:

Resistance is normal! Your child won't be jumping for joy over having limitations and boundaries. That is ok. Your child is starting to go to the internet independently for answers. It's your job as a parent to make decisions based on experience and understanding that kids just don't have yet. Be thoughtful and God-honoring in the guidelines you set and the way that you enforce them. Expect to explain (more than once) why you chose these guidelines to help them understand.

PREPARE:

Keep a log of your child's passwords for their email, devices and all social media accounts. Check these accounts and keep an eye on what your child is posting and what they are seeing. Establish that you are their accountability partner, helping them focus on making wise choices, and that this is not a punishment. Consider showing them your social media accounts regularly as well to increase trust and lessen their likelihood to

TALK:

Curiosity is a big motivator for your child. Even if they aren't looking for it, there is a high likelihood that they will stumble across pornography, racism, politics, or other inappropriate content. Don't hesitate to have some frank, developmentally relevant conversations about sex and other hot-button topics. The more they can talk to and hear from you, the less likely they are to seek answers online. Decide on a code word to use if they accidentally see or hear something inappropriate but they aren't able to discuss it right then and there. Make sure you follow up on these conversations. If you haven't yet, install filtering and monitoring software and explain to your child what it does and why it is helpful.

YOUR NEXT STEPS ARE...

Connect with your spouse about what the technology boundaries are in your home. Agree on a few principles and commit to upholding them. Have this discussion together before engaging the rest of your family. If you've already established a plan, take time to revisit it and revise as necessary. Once you as parents have agreed, invite your children in on the conversation. Use this activity to start three key discussions. Before you start, grab a padlock with a key, a permanent marker, a piece of paper, and a match or lighter.

Digital Footprint Activity

 **Ask:** What are padlocks used for? What types of things do they keep safe?

Do: Challenge your child to open the padlock. Let them try. Give them the key and challenge them again.

Discuss: Your online presence should be like a padlock. Don't share your passwords with anyone outside of our family. Create strong passwords that will keep your profiles and devices secure. What is an example of a strong password?

 **Ask:** What is something unkind that you have said about someone? What is something unkind that has been said about you?

Do: Have them draw something with the permanent marker on a piece of paper. Challenge them to erase what they've drawn.

Discuss: Things that you do and say online are permanent. They are never completely erased. Hurtful things stick in people's hearts and minds. All comments on profiles, every picture and video, the websites you search, and even Snapchats are permanent. What are some things we should avoid saying or posting online?

 **Ask:** What is a positive way to use fire? How can fire be used negatively? What rules do we have about fire?

Do: Turn off the lights and light the match. Point out the light that it makes. Ask your child to put their hand close enough that they can feel the warmth of the flame.

Discuss: Boundaries are so important. Fire can be used as a light in the darkness, to cook food, and to keep warm, but it can also destroy entire homes and forests. We can use technology for good things, like keeping in touch with family, learning new skills and researching for school. But technology can get scary, destructive and addictive really easily. What rules and guidelines do you think will help us stay safe?