



# GENERATION Z: TRENDING NOW

## WANT TO KNOW WHY YOUR TEEN IS GLUED TO THEIR SCREEN?

As the first generational cohort to have expansive digital access since birth, teenagers today are providing a new definition of what it means to be connected in the digital age. But beyond their digital presence, we're seeing other trends and patterns from research about this cohort born between 1995-2012. As leaders or parents to teenagers, we want to see the next generation succeed now to have a healthy, thriving future. The more we know about teens, and the complications of their connected world, the better we can cultivate their potential. Let's explore the seven insights gleaned from OneHope's research and other studies.





GEN Z IS:

# THE MOST DIVERSE GENERATION EVER



As many as **1 in 3 U.S. Gen Z'ers** say they are **LGBT**.<sup>1</sup>



**Almost half (48%) of Generation Z** in the United States are non-caucasian, compared to **only 18% of Baby Boomers** when they were children and teens.<sup>2</sup>



OneHope's research on teens in the United States reveals that **7 in 10 rarely or never talk about religious or spiritual things** with others who do not share their beliefs.



**Half of teens** in the U.S. say that it is difficult to dialogue with those from a different racial, ethnic, or religious background.<sup>3</sup>

## THE GIST

Perhaps stemming from a fear of appearing offensive or intolerant, today's teens defer to silence or avoidance of difficult topics as their best options.

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Create safe spaces for teens to share their opinions and thoughts. Car rides are great places for conversations. It's comfortable for teens because they don't have to look you in the eyes, and it's good for you because not only can they not walk away from the conversation for the length of the ride, but you also have their attention. Guide a discussion on a topic that you don't typically venture into by asking your teen or small group a question. Help them understand that their voice is important. If it's more comfortable for these digital natives to "talk" in their native language, start a group text. Axis has incredible resources and a Teen Culture Translator to get your conversations started.

<sup>1</sup> *LGBT Demographic Data Interactive*. The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law, January 2019.

<sup>2</sup> *Post-Millennial Generation On Track To Be Most Diverse, Best-Educated*. Pew Research Center, November 15, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> *Diversity, Division, Discrimination: The State of Young America*. MTV/PRRI, 2018.

GEN Z IS:



# THE LEAST RELIGIOUS GENERATION EVER

Nearly half (45%) of U.S. teens say they **never attend church** or any kind of religious service.



OneHope's research shows that **only 1 in 4** Christian Gen Z teens currently **read their Bible weekly or more frequently.**

Gen Z is twice as likely to **identify as atheist** compared to U.S. adults.<sup>1</sup>



When youth were asked why they became less religious, **nearly half (42%) said they were disinterested** and just stopped attending or couldn't think of a specific reason why.<sup>2</sup>

## THE GIST

Gen Z appears to be apathetic and disengaged when it comes to religion. But the good news is that many don't appear to be overtly hostile or angry toward God.

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

We can be creative in ways to engage the next generation in a transformative life with Christ. There's an incredible opportunity to guide and disciple teens in their faith walk. Think about starting a parent/teen small group or digital Bible study centered around conversation. Invite your teen to be a part of the planning process! Take advantage of online discipleship resources, like **YouVersion's Plans with Friends**, but don't underestimate the power of personal relationships. Gen Z wants to be invited into intentional relationships like mentoring, but they'll also expect you to be reverse-mentored by them. It's a win-win!

<sup>1</sup> Gen Z. Barna Group, Impact 360, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> *The Great Opportunity: The American Church in 2050*. Pinetops Foundation, 2018.

## GEN Z IS:



# A GENERATION OF AUTHENTIC DIGITAL NATIVES



Sixty-four percent say **social media helps them feel authentic** rather than fake, and even more agree it makes them feel **confident (69%)** and **included (71%).**<sup>1</sup>



2 out of 3 Gen Z'ers in the U.S. would **rather be considered real than unique.**<sup>2</sup>

**More than half (55%)** of Gen Z'ers say their social media image is very or somewhat **close to who they are in real life.**<sup>3</sup>



More than half (56%) of Gen Z'ers globally say they **prefer to be anonymous online.**

## THE GIST

It might seem like a contradiction for teens to report that social media is authentic, while at the same time seeking out anonymous platforms. But this may actually serve as a way of navigating the extremely complex digital world where Gen Z has essentially grown up in the public eye.

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Model and engage in authenticity on your own social media platforms as a way to connect with teens. Talk to the teens in your life about having layered circles of friends - some are closer than others, but that doesn't mean you have to be inauthentic to friends who are not as close.

<sup>1</sup> *Teens' Social Media Habits and Experiences*. Pew Research Center, November 28, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> *Getting to Know Gen Z: How the Pivotal Generation is Different from Millennials*. FutureCast, Barkley, 2017.

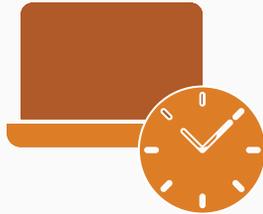
<sup>3</sup> *The State of Gen Z 2019-2020*. The Center for Generational Kinetics, 2020.

GEN Z IS:



# A GENERATION CONSTANTLY CONNECTED...AT A COST

According to OneHope's latest research, teens in the United States report **spending around 7.5 hours online daily.**



More than half of teens (**58%**) **report feeling stressed being away from their phone** for a few hours or less, with an additional 31% saying they **can't handle being separated for 30 minutes or less.**<sup>1</sup>



Teens who are **heavy social media users increase their risk of depression by 27%**, and those spending 3 or more hours a day on electronic devices are **35% more likely to have suicidal thoughts, and even a suicide plan.**<sup>2</sup>



The American Psychological Association reports that around **1 in 4** Gen Z'ers report their mental health as fair or poor, making their rates the highest of any generation.<sup>3</sup>



Recent surveys of U.S. teens revealed that those who spend 3 or more hours a day on an electronic device are **28% more likely to get less than 7 hours of sleep.**<sup>4</sup>

## THE GIST

Gen Z is a cohort of digital natives, but their digital use is spilling over into many areas of their lives, including their mental health and sleep patterns.

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The solution isn't as simple as putting away phones at dinner. There's a larger cultural norm in play. Think through: how can we help teens set healthy boundaries around digital use?

<sup>1</sup> *The State of Gen Z 2018*. The Center for Generational Kinetics, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> *Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?* The Atlantic, September 2017.

<sup>3</sup> *Gen Z More Likely to Report Mental Health Concerns*. American Psychological Association, January 2019.

<sup>4</sup> *Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?* The Atlantic, September 2017.



## GEN Z IS:

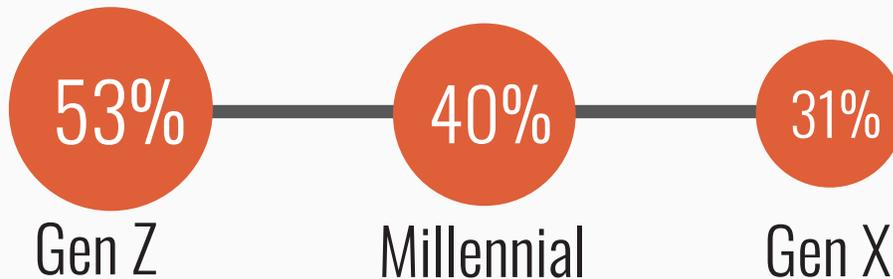
# A GENERATION OF EARLY ENTREPRENEURS



OneHope has found that **globally, 75% of teens say they want to start their own business** or own their own company in the future. In the US it's 59%.



Young people in the U.S. ages **18-22 are the most likely to be contract workers of any generation.** Just over half (53%) of them say they are doing freelance work compared to 40% of Millennials and 31% of Gen Xers.<sup>1</sup>



## THE GIST

It will be interesting to see how Gen Z continues to join the workforce, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Could the desire to branch off on their own lessen or increase? Only time will tell, but we can see Gen Z setting new trends in freelance work currently.

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

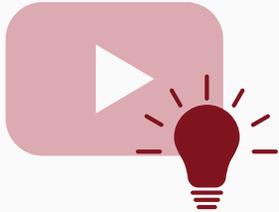
As leaders, we know that God supplies us both with dreams and the means to see those dreams fulfilled. Let's be encouraging to the next generation to follow their big dreams, even if it doesn't seem like a traditional or typical path.

<sup>1</sup> *Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?* The Atlantic, September 2017.



GEN Z IS:

# THE SELF-LEARNER GENERATION



Three in five teens in the U.S. say **YouTube is their number one preferred learning method.**<sup>1</sup>



Nearly half (47%) saying they spend **3 or more hours a day on Youtube.**<sup>2</sup>

**3 in 5 teens across the globe** say “I would rather work with others on a project than work alone.”<sup>3</sup>



Nearly 2 in 3 say classroom **discussion is the most helpful tool** in their learning.

## THE GIST

Long lectures in front of a whiteboard? Definitely not Gen Z’s style. They prefer creative collaboration and are very willing to seek out their own info before asking an adult.

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Think through: As learning preferences are changing, how are we rising to meet the challenge of engaging with teens in a way that will help them to succeed? Explore ways you can add more discussion time to your interactions with teens.

<sup>1</sup> *Beyond Millennials*. Pearson, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> *The State of Gen Z 2019-2020*. The Center for Generational Kinetics, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> *Gen Z in the Classroom*. Adobe, 2018.



## GEN Z IS:

# AN AMBITIOUS GENERATION

Two in five say that **professional and educational achievement is most important** to their sense of self, the first generation to rank those things higher than family.<sup>1</sup>



More than half (57%) of Gen Z'ers worldwide **expect to be promoted** at their jobs at least once a year.<sup>2</sup>



**Nearly half (43%) of U.S. teens define happiness as financial success.** In responding to this survey question, teens selected the image of a person holding a handful of \$100 bills to represent their picture of success.<sup>3</sup>

Nearly half (47%) of U.S. teens **believe they are already an expert** on something.<sup>4</sup>



## THE GIST

Gen Z values financial success and they believe they will have the skills and knowledge to take them far in life. They seem to be looking for fast pathways to success.

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The Gen Z cohort has the potential to achieve many noteworthy achievements. Gen Z may be knowledgeable, but they may be lacking maturity. Find ways as a mentor and leader to channel a teen's ambition in constructive outlets.

<sup>1</sup> Gen Z. Barna Group, Impact 360, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Meet Gen Z The Next Generation Is Here. Workforce Institute at Kronos, Future Workplace, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Gen Z. Barna Group, Impact 360, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Gen Z 2025: The Final Generation. Sparks and Honey, 2015.

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Teens today live in an incredibly complicated world. We can often see aspects of their lives in the digital sphere, but there is so much more happening behind the screen. Gen Z is digitally connected, ambitious, and the cohort is setting trends and standards in this fast-paced world.

It's our job to invite Gen Z into authentic relationships that help them discover who they are in Christ. Opening up avenues for dialogue where they can safely process questions and doubt lets us help them translate information into knowledge. And inviting them to serve alongside us now will help them grow into responsible, mature citizens whose character and actions are grounded in the truth of God's Word.