

GLOBAL YOUTH CULTURE



United States

GUIDE FOR TALKING TO TEENS



After reading the *Global Youth Culture: United States Report*, you're probably wondering what in the world to do with all of that information!

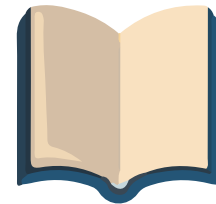
We've made it easier for you to...



See how U.S. teens' attitudes and behaviors compare to teens around world.



Use this guide to engage with your teen on issues they are encountering in their world.



Apply timeless biblical truths to the timely topics your teen is currently trying to navigate.

Religious Attitudes and Behaviors

40% of U.S. teens claim no religion, compared to 34% globally.

50% report they are Christian, but only 8% act like it.

OTHER RELIGION 11%

Muslim 12% • Buddhist 5% • Hindu 4%

NO RELIGION 39%

Atheist 14% • None 17% • Agnostic 8%



CHRISTIAN 50%

Discussion Questions

- Who do you know that follows another religion?
- Which one do they practice? How do you know?
- How can you start a conversation with someone who has different religious beliefs than you?
- How do your peers know what you believe?
- Do you ever discuss religion or spiritual things with your peers?
- How can you increase your witness?

Take this opportunity to pray with your teens. They need to know they aren't battling the magnetic pull of culture all on their own. David's words to his son Solomon in 1 Chronicles 28:20 provide an excellent template we can pray and speak over their lives:

“David also said to Solomon his son, ‘Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the Lord is finished.’”
1 Chronicles 28:20 (NIV)



Religious Attitudes and Behaviors



Nearly half (46%) of Christian teens in the U.S. say they never read the Bible, compared to 36% globally.

Knowing that teens who read the Bible—no matter how little or how much—struggle less than teens who don't, it's important to create the space and set aside the time for daily Scripture engagement.

Invite your teens to try a new reading plan. It can kick start their devotional time or help them dive deeper into the Word. Here are a few recommendations:

- Feed Catechism Reading Plans
- LUMO: *The Miracles of Jesus from The Gospel Of Mark*
- The Bible Project

Biblical Truth

The Bible is the living Word of God.

The Bible is the living Word of God. It isn't just an old book but is active, powerful, and guides us into knowing Truth. God can speak to you through the Bible in new, fresh ways every time you read it.

“Walk in obedience to all that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.”

Deuteronomy 5.33 (NIV)

“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

Hebrews 4.12 (NIV)



Personal Experiences and Struggles



Suicidal Thoughts



35% have recently had suicidal thoughts. The U.S. has the highest rate of the 20 countries surveyed, compared to 25% globally.

This statistic is heartbreaking, but as a parent or mentor to the next generation, you can be a part of changing this trend by helping teens process the thoughts and emotions they are feeling. This may be a difficult topic to approach. Maybe you've seen something in the news lately about a related story, or watched a movie recently that addressed suicide. Try to find common ground with your teen first before you bring up the following questions.

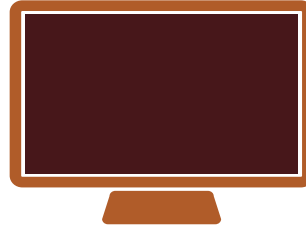
Discussion Questions

- What are some physical things that can cause suicidal thoughts? (This may lead to a great discussion about puberty and hormones, stress management, physical illness, addiction, loneliness, abuse or trauma, so make sure you're ready to tackle this topic.)
- Suicidal thoughts can also be a spiritual battle. No one invites physical or spiritual attacks, but they happen, and when they do, do you know where to get the help you need? (Again, be ready to suggest some people, places, programs, and prayers to resource you and your teen.)
- Feeling hopeless is nothing to be ashamed of and is not something to keep to yourself or battle on your own. What is a good way for you to be able to let me know when you are facing these low times in your life?

Take this opportunity to speak life over your teen. They need to hear the truth that they have a hope and a future to help combat any voices telling them otherwise. If your teen indicates they are experiencing thoughts of self harm, professional counseling could also be a great next step.

Personal Experiences and Struggles

Unfortunately, the digital age is also bringing more accessibility to pornography. Since nearly half of teens are struggling with this, it can't be a topic that's swept under the rug. Let's invite teens to bring their struggles out into the open so they can begin to make better choices.



48% of 13-15 year olds have viewed porn within the past three months, which is the same globally.

Discussion Questions

- Have you accidentally seen something you wish you hadn't?
- Where do they pop up on your devices?
- Do you, or anyone you know, ever search for photos, videos, or other content you know you shouldn't?
- What can I do to help guard your heart and mind against these images, thoughts and temptations?
- Have you had sexual feelings?
- Do you know of others having sex?
- Have you done anything physically with someone else that crossed a line?
- Are there safeguards I can put in place to help you keep your heart and body sexually pure?
- What do you believe about gender? What is confusing to you?
- Have you ever had feelings toward someone your same gender?
- Do you know of others who have changed their gender identity or have same-sex attractions?

Work with your teen to understand what the Bible says about sexuality. Pray together regularly and talk often about ways to implement a "theology of sexuality" in their daily lives.



Personal Experiences and Struggles

Biblical Truth

God does not intend for us to suffer alone.

Satan often uses the dark desires of this world to tempt us to sin against God - and they can certainly be very tempting. However, we are called to live in the light instead of the darkness. Even though it can be difficult, God is always with us and never forsakes us. When we struggle with temptation, His grace offers us restoration. If we seek Him, the Holy Spirit will empower us to withstand all temptation. God has also given us the gift of community and desires for us to live in unity with other believers - supporting one other and pointing one another to the Truth.

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

Psalm 46.1 (NIV)

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

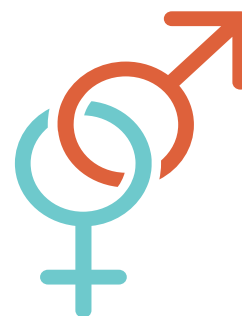
Ephesians 6.12-13 (NIV)

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable –if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things”

Philippians 4.8 (NIV)



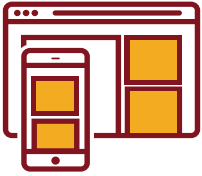
25% have recently felt sexually attracted to someone of the same gender, compared to **1 in 5** globally.



36% have been sexually active within the past three months, while only **30%** globally.



Digital Connectedness and Impact

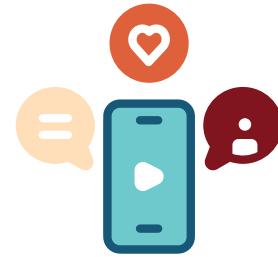


Finance guru Dave Ramsey says, “You must gain control over your money, or the lack of it will forever control you.” The same goes for technology. We must set safeguards in our lives to ensure it is working for us and not against us.

Discussion Questions

- Does spending more time online make you feel better or worse about yourself?
- What does this say about American teens?
- How does technology benefit us?
- How can technology distract us from building healthy relationships?
- Do you wish you spent more or less time online?
- Do you know anyone who is trying to fill a void or escape pain by spending time online?

Work with your teen to brainstorm a list of ways, a group of people, or activities that help them balance time online with in-person connection.



The U.S. ranks #1 in time spent watching videos; **96% watch videos daily.**



Heavy internet users are more than twice as likely to think about or attempt suicide.



Digital Connectedness and Impact

Biblical Truth

God desires to have a personal relationship with us.

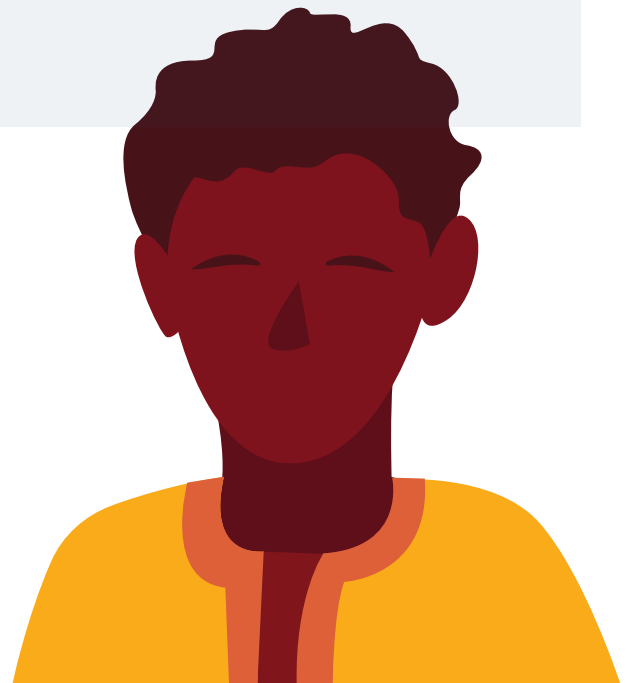
His love, compassion, and concern for our lives led to sending His Son Jesus to die for our sins. He wants you to spend eternity with Him, but also wants to have a deep relationship with you on Earth. Praying, worshiping, fasting, reading the Bible, and loving others are just a few ways to stay connected with God. But just like every human relationship is different, everyone finds different ways to experience relationship with God. Explore options and find what helps you feel most connected to Him.

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 8.38-39 (NIV)

“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

2 Peter 3.9 (NIV)

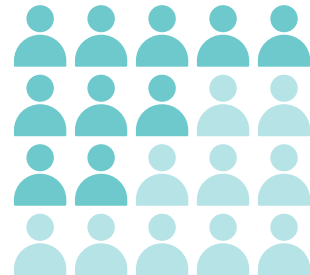


Identity and Relationships

Discussion Questions

- Where are people you know getting their information about gender?
- How are gender topics being portrayed online?
- What does the Bible have to say on this topic?
- What do you believe? Why?
- What do your friends think about marriage?
- Where are you feeling pressure to change your thinking on topics like this?

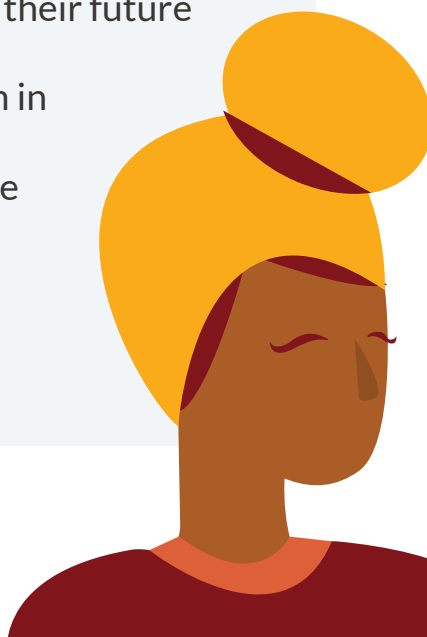
Take this opportunity to start praying with your teen for their future spouse. This is a powerful witness and exercise to do with your child. If you have been, tell them how long you have been praying for their future spouse, and let them know they are now old enough to join in bringing current relationships and future commitments before the Lord to ask for His leading.



50% say gender is based on a person's sex at birth; **50%** believe gender is a choice to be self-determined by a person's feelings or sexual attractions, compared to **43%** globally.



12% believe marriage should be a lifelong commitment between a man and a woman and that sex should be saved for marriage, compared to **10%** globally.



Identity and Relationships

Discussion Questions

- Which category most relates to you? Who do you know that's in the other category?
- Has this always been the case for you? For that person?
- What are important characteristics of a friend?
- How are you being a good friend to others?

If your teen shares that they are lonely, ask if there is an activity or group they would consider joining to make new friends. The youth group at your local church would also be a great opportunity to meet new people.

- What have been some of the good and the bad seasons in your family?
- Why do you think you are in the family you are in right now?
- What would make your family experience better? What can you do about it?

This might be the right time to talk through any pain or problems past or present. Apologize for mistakes; ask forgiveness, and commit to making positive changes, since the time you have left with your teen is limited before they are on their own!



75% have close friends who know them well; that means **25%** are lonely.



69% say their family experience has been good, compared to **82%** globally.



Identity and Relationships

Biblical Truth

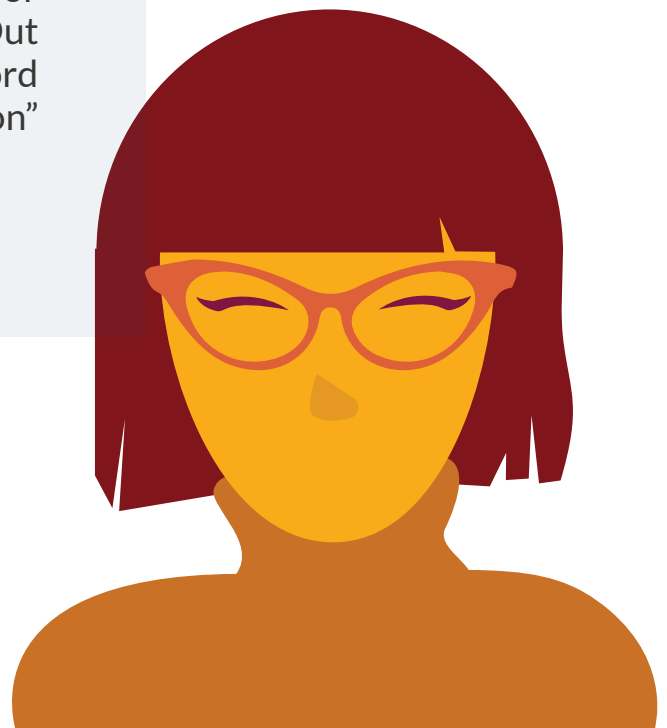
According to John 1:12-13, our identity is rooted in Christ and in the fact that we are children of God.

This identity sets us apart from the world and helps us experience God as our loving Father. In this family, we find joy, peace, and community with other believers.

“Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy”
1 Peter 2.10 (NIV)

“So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ”
Galatians 3.26-27 (NIV)

“You are the children of the Lord your God... for you are a people holy to the Lord your God. Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the Lord has chosen you to be his treasured possession”
Deuteronomy 14.1-2 (NIV)



Influences and Guiding Voices

Discussion Questions

- How has the world's view of family changed over the years? How has your view changed?
- When you have big questions, who is the first person you think to ask?
- What keeps you from seeking answers in the Bible?
- What do you think or feel about the institution of the church and church leaders today?
- Why do you think this is happening not just in the U.S. but all over the world?

Consider incorporating a short family devotional or Bible reading time during the week. It could be as simple as reading a few verses after dinner and asking each family member what stood out to them.

- How do you know information is credible?
- When was the last time you thought deeply about something? What was it and where did you land?
- Have you ever disagreed with someone else's viewpoint? What's your thought process when that happens?



Family is the first place teens turn for questions about right and wrong or the meaning of life. This number is the same globally.



The last place teens—even Christians—seek guidance is from church or the Bible. This number is the same globally.



Friends and the Internet are the first place to go for information or guidance about gender, sexuality, and sexual issues. This number is the same globally.

Influences and Guiding Voices

Discussion Questions

Make a list of every topic you and your teen can think of that impacts their daily life—family, school, dating, temptations, friends, addiction, lying, integrity...just keep growing that list until you can't think of another thing! Now pray for each one, and make a note of a trusted place or person they can go to for help or guidance in each. Some may have multiple places, like "God's Word, Pastor Terry, and Coach." Regularly go through the list and ask them if they've had questions and if they've gone to the best person or place to find answers.

- What are some things about your faith you've ever doubted, questioned, or wondered about?
- Do you know anyone who follows a different religion than their parents or grandparents?
- What are some things about your faith you've ever doubted or questioned?



41% said a personal experience would likely change my mind about a religious belief, compared to **37%** globally.



60% of US teens believe education guarantees a better future, compared to **72%** globally.



Influences and Guiding Voices

What a beautiful opportunity to speak destiny over your child! Affirm that they were created in God's image and with a divine purpose. If your teen is still struggling to see why they've been put on this earth, begin naming their positive traits out loud as often as possible, "God gave you a huge amount of creativity!" You can text it, too: "I know you hear others using foul language. I'm thankful that you are brave enough to be different and choose to use words that honor God."

Ask your teen to set some personal goals from a few conversations or topics you discussed from this report. Don't stop praying for your teen, and don't stop talking to them—communication is key!

Biblical Truth

God is all that we need, now and forever.

God is powerful, full of glory, and helps us in times of need. When you have doubts, questions about life, or need comfort, talk to God. Remember: He cares for you and has a special plan for your life that only you can fulfill. His Spirit will guide you into God's purpose for your life as you grow in trust and faith.

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you"
Psalm 32.8 (NIV)

"Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and His understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."
Isaiah 40.28-31 (NIV)



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