

# WHAT'S UP?



## A PAGE FOR PARENTS OF TEENS

The newsletter designed to help you better understand and relate to today's youth culture and your church's teenagers— including your own.

# CULTURE WATCH



**IDOLS.** That is a word that carries several definitions in our western context. In today's culture, the word "idol" typically is in reference to someone's favorite celebrity or musician—any person that is greatly admired, loved, or revered. For many sports-loving teenagers, LeBron James or Tom Brady may be considered their idols in the sports world; for others, it may be Taylor Swift or Beyoncé.

Regardless of who is or is not considered to be an admired icon, culture's definition of what an idol is *still* corresponds with its proper definition: a representation or a symbol used as an object of worship. The culture is conditioning our students to turn celebrities, or various other things, into objects of worship, into modern-day idols. Some examples of what is worshiped in our culture include: artists of various kinds (film, music, internet), athletes or sports teams, entertainment, social media (the need

to be noticed or heard, regardless of the kind of attention received), social justice (though this can be a positive thing, many millennials are obsessive with it), and relationships.

An idol is not only an image or representation of some man-made deity. An idol is simply anything that becomes an object of worship. We are designed to be worshipers—the Creator made us that way. Every human be-



ing worships someone or something, though our teenagers may not interpret it that way. Currently (though this has existed throughout human history) our culture is comprised of self-worshippers. Our tendency is to give all of our attention (worship) to anything or anyone that benefits or promotes us. The problem with this mentality is that whatever gets our attention often determines our direction. When we are tempted to worship anything other than God, we must remember the words of Jesus, *Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

The articles in *Forward* and *Velocity* magazines provide great discussion starters for you and your teen. Also, devotions for teens cover the same topics as the adult devotions in *FUSION* and *FUSIONnext*, creating opportunities for family Bible study. Read them, discuss them, and use them as a tool for discipleship in the home.





So it's time for spring cleaning and your teen has no desire to vacuum the curtains again. This year, opt for a fun trip down memory-lane by getting your teen to help you go through books or movies from their childhood. As you find the ones they love, read or watch them together and pack up the others to be donated or sold. Your teen will enjoy the quality time and reminiscing and you'll get to mark another item off the to-do list.

# PARENTING TEENS

The thought that our teenagers live in a culture that is centered on worshipping ourselves should not come as a surprise. This has been taking place throughout human history, starting in the Garden of Eden. However, just because it has been the norm does not mean that parents should respond nonchalantly. Here are some important things to consider when trying to challenge your teenager(s) to avoid the trap of modern-day idolatry:

1. Make your personal relationship with God a priority. If we claim that spending time in the Word and in prayer strengthens our relationship with God, then we need to do it! Find a specific time and place where you will be alone with God through prayer and His Word. If we ever want to make an impact on our children, we must first demonstrate a growing relationship with the One who is truly worthy to be our only object of worship.
2. Have conversations with your teenager about prioritizing what is important. A great question

to ask in regard to this point: "Is there anything in your life that you feel like you couldn't live without?" Whether it is a silly response or a more alarming response, whatever their answer is to that question is an idol. Ultimately the most important thing is how we choose to worship God. Every choice we make and every action we take is directly related to worship.

3. Talk with your teenager about distractions from what is important. This can be an incredibly insightful conversation, but it requires vulnerability from us parents. If we are willing to admit where we are distracted, it will help lead the conversation to a helpful place.
4. Develop a game plan. After engaging in a conversation about priorities and distractions (idols) from what is most important, develop a plan to combat the temptations of idolatry. Include your teenager in the game plan. Help hold each other accountable as you move toward more intimacy with the Lord.

## ON the CALENDAR

- Mar 14** National Pi Day
- Mar 17** St. Patrick's Day
- Mar 23** National Chip and Dip Day
- Mar 25** Palm Sunday
- Mar 30** Good Friday
- Apr 1** Easter
- Apr 1** April Fool's Day
- Apr 7** No Housework Day
- Apr 8** Zoo Lovers Day
- Apr 26** Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day
- May 3** National Day of Prayer
- May 6** National Nurses Day
- May 14** Chicken Dance Day
- May 28** Memorial Day

## POSITIVE NEWS ABOUT TEENS

Jacquelle Crowe is 19 years old but began writing for young people at the age of 11. Since that time she has published 1,000 articles. She is currently the editor-in-chief of *The Rebellion* and a contributor for other major Christian blog sites. Jacquelle hopes to share articles which can inspire and connect young people in a deeper relationship with their faith. Keep up with her at [www.jacquelle.ca](http://www.jacquelle.ca) or on her podcast "Age of Minority."

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