



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

More To The Story / Week 2

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

BOTTOM LINE

Porn never tells the whole story.

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

For students to recognize cultural messages about sex (specifically the messages influenced by pornography and porn-like ads), and begin to think critically about them in light of God's heart for them and His plan for their lives.

Note to Ministry Leaders and Communicators: We intentionally steer away in the script and in the small group questions from connecting porn to shame, and the detrimental effect it has on a person's relationship with God. The reason for this is because shame is never a great motivator for long-term behavior change. Most teenagers in church are already feeling shame about their relationship with porn, and may already be prone to assuming God is angry at them or disappointed in them. The intention behind this discussion guide is to help leaders guide the discussion toward hope and practical steps for thinking critically about porn, and taking steps to change behavior. As you lead this conversation, be mindful of how you talk and the language you use that never sets up a student to feel shame or like there is something wrong with them, but rather, like everyone, they are a victim to the porn industry and that there is hope for them.

SCRIPTURE

The simple believe anything, but the prudent give thought to their steps (Proverbs 14:15 NIV).

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise (Ephesians 5:15 NIV).

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- Let me start with a quick question: are there any people who are your friends right now, that you did NOT like when you first met them?
- You probably have some friends that didn't like YOU when they first met YOU.
- The reality is, there are some topics that we've possibly all had some impressions of or opinions about. There's more to the story.
- We ARE going to talk about a topic that you don't expect to talk about in church. Are you ready? We're going to talk about porn.

TENSION

- Whether or not you think it's a problem, here are a few things you should know...
 - Depending on what kind of music you listen to, you hear references to things that are somewhat pornographic on a pretty consistent basis.

- If you watch TV, movies, Netflix, Hulu, etc., you've possibly seen things that could be labeled as porn.
- The average age of exposure to porn is 11 years old.
- We're not just affected by porn. We're actually INFLUENCED by the culture of porn.
- Porn culture is all around us!
- Porn is sexualized content designed to get a specific response.
- The problem is that porn was never designed to educate you. It was designed to hook you and make you addicted.
- We're being influenced by something that's teaching us a fake education.
- *Note: The Interactive happens here. See your Teaching Script for more details.*

TRUTH

- There's a book in the Bible called Proverbs. It's a book of poetry that is primarily about wisdom, which simply means truths that make your life better.
- These proverbs were written by an ancient king named Solomon, who was famously known as an extremely wise person.
- Some of this wisdom may be confusing, but a lot of it actually makes sense in the lives of teenagers and adults alike (Proverbs 14:15 NIV).
- "Simple" is basically naïve. We've been naïve when it comes to porn. We've believed everything.
- Porn never tells the whole story.
- There's a website called FightTheNewDrug.org. They've compiled decades of studies from respected institutions about pornography.
- Communicator Note: Pick 3-4 of the listed examples that will resonate most with your audience.
- Porn doesn't tell you facts like this when you look at it. It wants you to be distracted and addicted. It doesn't want you to have a full, complete life.
- Porn will not make you better at sex.
- Porn will not make sex better for you.
- Porn will not help you understand what sex is like.
- God isn't against porn because He thinks that the act of sex is bad. He's anti-porn because pornography has twisted what He intended sex to be.
- God is a 100% loving God, and there is absolutely nothing loving about pornography.
- A person evaluates information carefully so that they don't fall into a trap. And that's exactly what porn is: a trap (Proverbs 14:15b NIV).
- Many, many years after Solomon wrote the book of Proverbs in the Old Testament, a man named Paul wrote a letter that became part of the New Testament (Ephesians 5:15 NIV).
- When Paul says, "Be very careful," it's similar to Solomon saying, "Give thought to your steps." Don't believe everything you hear.

APPLICATION

- There are lots of steps we could all take. but for the sake of today, we're simply going to focus on two:
 - Refuse to be fooled.
 - Refuse to participate.

LANDING

- None of us want to be a part of something that manipulates us. We don't want to associate with something that hurts us and others.
- But porn culture is sneaky. And now that we've named that, we can open our eyes, see it for what it is, and step the other way.
- Porn is hurtful and damaging: God wants better for us.

INTERACTIVE

This Interactive happens in the Intro section; please see that section for more details. For this Interactive you'll need...

- A fast food item (preferably a McDonald's Big Mac).



TEACHING SCRIPT

More To The Story / Week 2

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BOTTOM LINE

Porn never tells the whole story.

INTRODUCTION

3 MINUTES

Let me start with a quick question...

Are there any people who are your friends right now, that you did NOT like when you first met them? Don't point them out if they're in the room!

Yeah, that's actually a pretty common thing. In fact, you probably have some friends that didn't like YOU when they first met YOU.

Maybe it's not that they disliked you—they just didn't understand you. They thought that you were strange or stuck up or rude or annoying. And then they spent time with you and realized there's more to the story—that you weren't the person they originally thought you were.

That's what we're talking about in this series. Because the reality is, there are some topics that we've possibly all had some impressions of or opinions about. The way we see things are slightly off, twisted, or just plain wrong. There's more we need to understand.

There's more to the story.

There are topics that you expect to talk about in church, right? Topics like...

- Prayer
- Love
- The Bible

That makes sense, right? And then there are things that you DON'T expect to talk about in church...

- NFL football
- Harry Styles
- Streaming content on Twitch
- How to get more TikTok followers

Today, we're going to talk about Harry Styles...I'm kidding! But we ARE going to talk about a topic that you don't expect to talk about in church. Are you ready?

We're talking about porn.

TENSION

4 MINUTES

Maybe you're surprised I just said that. Or maybe you just rolled your eyes because straight up, you're like, "*It's not a big deal.*" Or maybe you're acting disgusted right now to keep your church image intact. But whether or not you think it's a problem, here are a few things you should know...

- **Depending on what kind of music you listen to, you hear references to things that are somewhat pornographic on a pretty consistent basis.** It doesn't seem like a big deal when artists like DaBaby or Cardi B rap about it, or when a comedian jokes about it. Why is it such a big deal that I'm talking about it?
- **If you watch TV, movies, Netflix, Hulu, etc., you've possibly seen things that could be labeled as porn.** Just because it wasn't an X-rated website on your phone, doesn't mean that it didn't have undertones of porn or pornographic imagery. I'm not saying that to make you feel guilty. I'm just trying to make a point that this topic isn't as foreign and far away as you think.
- **The average age of exposure to porn is 11 years old** ("Talking to Your Child About Pornography")¹. So, we're talking about something that is already affecting someone around you. By no means am I assuming that all of you have had encounters with porn. I'm just making a point that this IS a pre-teen thing, a teenage thing, and an adult thing. This affects EVERYONE on the planet who has access to the Internet. And if something affects everyone on the planet, we feel like it's okay—and maybe even necessary—to talk about it.

If you're new to church and a little shocked that we're talking about this, I get it. And don't worry, we'll get back to topics like praying and reading the Bible to make you feel more at ease! I'm kidding. I know this topic isn't easy, but here's something that I would love for all of you to get today...

We're not just affected by porn. We're actually INFLUENCED by the culture of porn. Here's what I mean...

- This is not something that could potentially tempt some of us.
- This is not something that just affects some of us.
- *This is something that influences ALL of us!*

Why? Because porn culture is all around us! Snapchat, sexting, movies, music, advertisements, conversations, apps, etc. It's everywhere! Plus, the porn industry generates \$12 BILLION dollars a year.² That's more than the combined annual revenues of ABC, NBC, and CBS! It's AROUND us all the time! And it's impossible to spend time around something and NOT be affected by it!

When it comes down to it, **porn is sexualized content designed to get a specific response.** A lot of people start watching porn because they're curious, so it's kind of like sex education. The problem is that porn was never designed to educate you. It was designed to hook you and make you addicted. It was designed to manipulate you. **We're being influenced by something that's teaching us a fake education.**

¹ "Talking to Your Child About Pornography." Break the Cycle, 27 Apr. 2017, www.breakthecycle.org/talking-your-child-about-pornography-0#:~:text=In%20fact%2C%20the%20average%20age,sex%20education%20for%20young%20people

² "Enough Is Enough: The Porn Industry Archives." Enough.Org, 2016, [enough.org/stats_porn_industry_archives#:~:text=The%20pornography%20industry%20generates%20\\$24.12,billion%20dollars%20in%20annual%20revenue](http://enough.org/stats_porn_industry_archives#:~:text=The%20pornography%20industry%20generates%20$24.12,billion%20dollars%20in%20annual%20revenue).

And what's interesting, is that you and I are typically quick to see right through things that aren't legit. For example,...



How many of you love McDonald's? No one's mad at you if you do, and no one's mad at you if you don't. Maybe just pretend it's actually Wendy's or Burger King. Let's say that a McDonald's manager came here and talked about eating healthy. And he or she talked only about eating things like Big Macs, fries, and McFlurries. None of you would fall for it. You'd see right through it. You'd be like, "Why are we allowing THIS person to teach us about healthy nutrition?"

Going to porn is like going to McDonald's to eat healthy. It would have adverse effects! Going to porn for "sex" or sex education is the same. It has adverse effects and can actually hurt you!

The truth is, that there's more to the story, and that's what we're going to talk about for the next few minutes.

TRUTH

8 MINUTES

There's a book in the Bible called Proverbs. The Bible is actually a collection of books, and it's split into two sections: The Old Testament and New Testament, which basically just means the books before Jesus walked the Earth and the books after. Proverbs is in the Old Testament, and it's a book of poetry that is primarily about wisdom, which simply means truths that make your life better. These proverbs were written by an ancient king named Solomon, who was famously known as an extremely wise person.

But what does an ancient king have to say that would be relevant to our lives now? Some of it may be confusing, but a lot of it actually makes sense in the lives of teenagers and adults alike. For example, the verse we're going to look at today says this...

The simple believe anything, but the prudent give thought to their steps (Proverbs 14:15 NIV).

"Simple" is basically naïve. For example, a "simple" person believes everything they read online. They think every science experiment works like they see on TikTok. They fall for any prank because they're easily tricked. Gullible. They believe anything!

And when it comes to porn, maybe you've heard or thought statements like this...

- *It's not hurting anyone.*
- *There are worse things I could be doing...*
- *I'm not "doing" anything...*
- *I just "looked..."*
- *At least I'm not having sex with a real person...*

We've been naïve when it comes to porn. We've believed everything! But hear this...

Porn never tells the whole story.

There's a website called FightTheNewDrug.org. They've compiled decades of studies from respected institutions about pornography. Their website has assembled over 1,000 pornography-related articles. Here are some of the researched facts they discovered...

(Communicator Note: Pick 3-4 of the following examples that will resonate most with your audience.)

- *Studies have found that porn use is correlated with less sexual and relationship satisfaction.*
- *Studies have found that porn use is correlated with intimacy problems.*
- *Frequent exposure to pornography is associated with less interest in having a sexually exclusive relationship with a partner.*
- *Frequent exposure to pornography is associated with the belief that marriage is sexually confining, and that having children and a family is not a good idea.*
- *Frequent exposure to pornography is associated with believing it's possible to have high sexual satisfaction without having affection for one's partner.*
- *Frequent exposure to pornography is associated with less trust in intimate partners.*
- *The sex acts shown in pornography are unrealistic and often abusive.*
- *Researchers have found that even moderate porn use was correlated with having a lowered response to sexual cues in the brain.*
- *Studies have found that porn use is correlated with lowered quality of life and poorer health.*
- *Even moderate porn use is correlated with damage to parts of the brain involved with motivation and decision-making.*
- *Compulsive pornography users are at risk for depression and stress.*
- *When adolescents, both male and female, are exposed to sexualized media, they are more likely to have stronger notions of women being sex objects.*
- *Pornography makes violence appear sexy.*³

Porn doesn't tell you facts like this when you look at it. It wants you to be distracted and addicted. It doesn't want you to have a full, complete life. Consider this...

- **Porn will not make you better at sex.** It might actually make you worse because it damages your relationships.
- **Porn will not make sex better for you.** It will actually make it less desirable because it doesn't give you realistic expectations of sex.
- **Porn will not help you understand what sex is like.** It will actually confuse you and lead you further away from understanding it.

God isn't against porn because He thinks that the act of sex is bad. He's anti-porn because pornography has twisted what He intended sex to be. He is anti-porn because it devalues people He cares about—which is everyone. He's anti-porn because it's bad for you and bad for others. **God is a 100% loving God, and there is absolutely nothing loving about pornography.**

The second part of the verse says this...

The prudent give thoughts to their steps (Proverbs 14:15b NIV).

This means that a person evaluates information carefully so that they don't fall into a trap. And that's exactly what porn is: a trap. It's a trap that wants something FROM you—time, attention, money, addiction, etc.—and in exchange, it gives you a false sense of sexual closeness. Culture doesn't tell you that, because they don't see it themselves.

³ "Home." *Fight the New Drug*, 7 May 2020, fightthenewdrug.org.

A “prudent” person is basically someone who’s wise. And many, many years after Solomon wrote the book of Proverbs in the Old Testament, a man named Paul wrote a letter that became part of the New Testament. He wrote to a group of people that he loved and cared about a lot, and he said this...

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise (Ephesians 5:15 NIV).

When Paul says, “Be very careful,” it’s similar to Solomon saying, “Give thought to your steps.” Don’t believe everything you hear. **Porn never tells the whole story.** When you’re being manipulated, step the other way. Be prudent. Be wise. Get yourself away from something that is so destructive!

APPLICATION

2.5 MINUTES

It would be crazy for someone to teach us about “being healthy” from a menu at a fast food restaurant, right? We would see right through it. We need to have the same mentality when it comes to porn culture.

There are lots of steps we could all take, but for the sake of today, we’re simply going to focus on two...

1. **Refuse to be fooled.** Train your brain: When you see the ad or the Snapchat, argue with it. Question it: *What is this trying to sell me or convince me to do?*

All of you are adults. You’re smart! You see through SO MANY things that are fake or manipulative. You have to access those same smarts when it comes to porn culture. Remember, it’s EVERYWHERE, and it wants something from you. It doesn’t care about you or want what’s best for you—it wants to trap you. Be wise. Be smart. Be careful.

2. **Refuse to participate.** Create a plan to set yourself up for success before you even reach the trap. Think ahead: *What will you do when you come across pornographic content or are tempted to believe the lies of porn culture?*

How will you put a stop to the manipulation? Sometimes it isn’t enough to know you’re being tricked. You need help to get un-manipulated. Maybe you need to take concrete action and put some restrictions around your access to technology.

If an industry makes \$12 BILLION dollars a year, you can believe that it’s VERY persuasive and convincing! Remember it’s a trap, and it’s not possible to get out of every trap by yourself. Talk to a trusted adult or Small Group Leader. Let them know what’s going on. It may be that you have some things you need to confess and get off your shoulders. It may be that you need to ask them for some accountability—to check in with you from time to time. We need each other to help fight against this industry.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

None of us want to be a part of something that manipulates us. We don’t want to associate with something that hurts us and others. We’re smart, and we don’t want to be controlled.

But porn culture is sneaky. And now that we've named that, we can open our eyes, see it for what it is, and step the other way. And imagine if we did. How liberating would it be to move forward without being trapped by something that's so destructive to so many people? We would hurt ourselves and others less, and that's A BIG DEAL!

Porn never tells the whole story. On the other hand, we have a God who loves us immensely and—out of His love for us—wants good things for us. He wants to see us thrive, not suffer. Porn is hurtful and damaging: God wants better for us. He has given us incredible minds to see through the lies, and incredible wills to walk away. So, choose wisdom. Be proactive. Be willing to have hard conversations. This is worth the fight.



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
