

// Parent Ministry

52 Ways to Connect with Your Smart Phone Obsessed Kid

How to Engage with Kids Who Can't Seem to Pry Their Eyes from their Devices

Authors: Jonathan McKee

REVIEW:

Author, speaker and all-around parenting guru, Jonathan McKee has written an intelligent and very helpful book called, *52 Ways to Connect with Your Smart Phone Obsessed Kid*. Whether you have young children watching their favorite cartoon on Netflix or older children constantly texting and updating their social media feed, this is an amazingly helpful book.

Each of the 52 short sections includes personal stories, helpful thoughts, hints, and end with challenging questions for parents to ponder. The book also ends with a section called "52 Creative Sets of Questions to Ask Your Kids in These 52 Venues." This final section is written to help parents take the next steps to enable connections.

SNAPSHOT

This is a truly a short snapshot of this books, giving just a quick look at a few of the 52 thoughtful ways to connect. There would be no way to sum up each of these 52 sections, as each is packed full of excellent information. We hope this will help you a bit, but will also make you want to purchase the full book for yourself. It really is well worth the purchase and read.

Introduction: "Being Smarter than the Smartphone"

Children of all ages are now spending more time on devices and phones than almost anything else, close to 9 hours a day. It is affecting their sleep, grades and relationships. Screens are the new place for bullying and peer-pressure. Experts are even suggesting kids shouldn't have a smart device until they are at least thirteen. It is time for kids to get smarter than their smartphones and for parents to make intentional chooses to find ways to connect their children.

#1. The Co-viewing Connection

Co-viewing is an opportunity to connect with child. Co-viewing gives parents a peek into the world of entertainment and allows them a springboard into conversations. Parents who avoid overreacting will be rewarded with teaching opportunities and great discussion.

#3. Fingertip Questions

The well-placed question is a huge tool in the connection toolbox. Here are four quick practical tips for asking a well-placed finger tip question: 1.) *Observation*, asking a kid to pause and observe. 2.) *Interpretation*, allowing a kid to process content. 3.) *Opinion*, challenging a kid to offer personal values. 4.) *Foundation*, looking into the Bible together to see what it has to say.

#7. Two-Player Mode

Kids, especially boys, love video games. Boys average about 56 minutes a day playing video games compared to 7 minutes for girls. Parents should consider jumping in and asking their son to switch over their game to two-player mode in order to engage, discover and connect!



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#18. The Safe Source

The angry outburst has destroyed so many connections and relationships. Children need parents to be their safe place to come without the freak out. This especially applies when it comes to devices. Consider these hints: 1.) *Buy Time*. Take some time to think before responding. 2.) *Hear Them Out*. After taking time to think, allow a child to share their side of situations. 3.) *Ask Your Kid's Advice*. Parents should consider asking their son or daughter how they should be punished or what can be learned from the situation.

#20. The Playlist Connection

Music can be a connection point with children. Instead of parents judging music or making broad rules, parents can talk and process together. A few fun ways to create a "playlist connection" are: 1.) *Home Sharing*. Instead of allowing children to have private music application accounts, create a family account. 2.) *Name that Tune*. During family road trips allow children to play some snippets of their music taste, testing parent's knowledge while showing interest. 3.) *Spotify*. Join Spotify and connect with a child's playlist, not to spy but rather to keep connected.

#34. The School Shuffle Strategy

Parents have a natural audience and connection venue during the car ride to school. During these rides, parents can do two simple things to keep connection and conversation: 1.) Establish a no-headphones policy when they are young. 2.) If smartphones come out, ask engaging questions. Car rides provide parents with a captive audience. Parents should take advantage of it as much as they can.

#41: Here Are the Keys.

Kids want incremental independence even with small tasks. Allowing children non-device related opportunities to feel like a grown up in simple activities, like pushing the shopping cart, using the stove, mowing the lawn and even learning how to safely operate a saw, opens conversation and connection. Long before parents toss their kids the keys to the family mini-van, they can be creating experiences that are bonding moments.

#47. The "Don't Fast"

No matter how well behaved a child is, every parent seems to have a favorite word, "Don't". Parents need to practice a combination of "Bonding" and "Boundaries". If all parents do is give boundaries, continually saying "don't", they will miss the bonding moments. Parents should consider taking a "don't fast" for a day here and there to see what happens. Parents might be surprised what will happen with they take a break from always saying "don't" and "no".

Once again, the above is a very quick overview of a great book. We hope you pick up the full book. You can find other great parenting books and resources from Jonathan McKee at your local book store, online at places like Amazon, or directly from his parenting website:

<http://thesource4parents.com> .