



CROSSWAY STUDENT MINISTRY

TECHNOLOGY

MIDDLE SCHOOL

CONVERSATION GUIDE

Your middle schooler might seem tech savvy, but they're not life savvy yet. They might want freedom online, but they're not ready for it. Don't make privacy something you're taking away from them, but rather something you're working toward as a team. Be clear about it and to the best of your ability, paint the picture that both of you have the same goal—an awesome experience with technology. Remember your role in this phase is to help them . . .

COLLABORATE

So they will...

**RESPECT LIMITS &
STRENGTHEN SOCIAL ABILITIES**

A PLAN

This guide is designed to help you meet your middle schooler where they are now, giving you some words to say as you navigate the critical issue of technology. As the conversation progresses through the phases, always keep the end goal in mind: **TECHNOLOGICAL RESPONSIBILITY**. Leveraging online experiences to enhance my offline community and success.

TRY THIS...

ENGAGE WITH TECHNOLOGY. Challenge yourself to become familiar with new aspects of technology—a filter, a GIF, an app, a game, etc. Engage with your middle schooler by sharing the new skills with them, and ask them to show you anything new they've learned, too.

SIGN AN AGREEMENT. At theParentCue.org, you can find a cell phone agreement with some healthy guidelines you can establish with your middle schooler when they get a phone. There are items for them to initial their agreement to, that you

can hold them accountable to, like where they will keep their tech at night. Use this agreement to lay out expectations for technology use that leads to increasing freedom.

BUILD OTHERS UP. Technology is a tool that can be used for good or evil. Challenge your middle schooler to say at least one positive thing about something or someone on technology three times a week. Help them learn to make a habit of using technology to build others up, and never tear them down. And make sure you're modeling this one as well!

SAY THIS...

"Let me find out more about that and I will let you know" (When they get a phone, share an account and research their apps.)

"I saw this video and it made me think of you." (Use technology to connect throughout the day—with no agenda.)

"We should respect people online as much as we respect them in person." (Talk about how devices sometimes escalate bullying.)

"Can you teach me how to use this app?" (Use mobile devices to connect: text, share, learn, and play together.)

"What you post is public, even if it feels private. And it can be permanent." (Help them recognize potential risks related to the words, images, and videos they create.)

"What should the password be?" (When you are ready, set up social media accounts together, and know their passwords.)

"Is it okay if I comment on your posts?" (Be considerate about how you engage with them online.)

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