

### Provide Godly Perspective About Moral Issues

The "generation gap" between teenagers and parents is evident not just in different tastes in music and clothes. Many of today's young people also have different attitudes from their parents about moral issues such as homosexuality and cohabitation. Meanwhile, cursing has become an accepted form of everyday conversation, and pornography is spreading like wildfire, due to new technology.



Jim Burns, author of *The 10 Building Blocks for a Happy Family*, says one essential building block is healthy morals and values. "The decisions kids make today will often affect them for the rest of their lives," he writes. "Parents have significant powers of influence—through modeling and teaching—over the morals and values their kids carry into adulthood."

In our "anything goes" society, it isn't enough to just preach your beliefs. To instill lasting Christian values in your kids, you should lead by example, remembering that perfection isn't expected (or possible).

Don't be afraid to bring up controversial topics and ask how your kids feel about them. Instead of quickly shooting down their opinions, listen to their reasoning. Pay attention to what your kids' friends and media choices say about moral issues. Then dig up some tough questions and connect Scripture to real-life moral dilemmas. Most importantly, let kids know you aren't the moral decision-makers; God sets his standards for right and wrong in the Bible. And he promises to bless people who strive to follow his commands out of love for him. Use this issue of "The Parent Link" to help you and your kids tackle tough moral issues.

#### The United Methodist Perspective

I identify with Romans 7:15. Paul writes, "I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate." I regularly fall short of being who I want to be and who God calls me to be.

John Wesley taught that God provides us with:

- Prevenient grace: Our loving God offers us grace before we accept or even recognize it.
- Justifying grace: We accept God's grace, come into a new life, and are changed.
- Sanctifying grace: God's sustaining grace supports us as we move toward perfection.

Wesley describes the way we humans fall short as "backsliding." These Romans 7:15 times are frustrating and even destructive.

Christians often think we need to hide our faults and "have it all together" to come to church and share our faith. But instead of feeling defeated by inevitable backsliding, we should remember God's sustaining grace that supports and pushes us on as we grow and move toward perfection in Christ.

—Hank Hilliard, Young People's Ministries, [hilliard@GBOD.org](mailto:hilliard@GBOD.org)



**Hot-button issues are dividing many 21<sup>st</sup>-century families. Here's a snapshot into what's morally okay with today's teenagers:**

- Young people say they have the most conflicts with older adults over lifestyle issues, including their views on family.

(Pew Research Center)



- A majority (59%) of 18- to 29-year-olds think gay or lesbian couples should be allowed to legally marry, while support among the older age groups reaches only as high as 40%.

(USA Today/Gallup Poll)

- More than two-thirds (69%) of young people approve of living together before marriage. And almost half (49%) of "churched" kids approve of this arrangement.

(Gallup Poll)

## Great Questions to Ask Your Kids

Encourage your teenagers to open up about tough moral issues by asking point-blank questions:

1. Do you think God approves of and loves homosexuals? Why or why not? Should gay couples be allowed to marry?
2. If two people are going to get married anyway, is it okay for them to live together first? Why or why not?
3. What effects can porn have on people's sexual attitudes and habits?
4. What does it feel like to "go against the tide" and stand up against immoral behavior? What can help you face that challenge?



## Focus on Prayer

### PRAY THAT:

1. Your teenagers will internalize Christian morals and use God's Word as a guide to determine what's right and wrong.
2. Your kids will feel comfortable opening up to you about the day-to-day moral dilemmas they face.
3. God will help you be a strong moral example for your impressionable teenagers.
4. Your teenagers will shine as lights in a dark world and make an impact on others who are searching for truth.

### Verse of the Month

**"Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people. Hold firmly to the word of life." (Philippians 2:15-16)**

Sin is the root cause of all the immorality and ungodly behavior in our world. But because our perfect God paid the ultimate price for our sins, we have his hope and forgiveness. When we reflect God's light and live by his Word, other people will see that God's truth is the right path.

## What's Up With Kids

**More Christian kids are becoming "Christian chameleons" these days, according to David R. Smith, content development director at TheSource4YM.com. (Read his entire article by typing "chameleons" into the search engine at [wwwSimplyYouthMinistry.com](http://wwwSimplyYouthMinistry.com).)**

Many teenagers reflect the morals of the world rather than Scripture. The sad truth is that the lifestyle of a "churched" or "Christian" teenager is far too similar to the lifestyle of an unchurched or non-Christian teenager these days. The line has become so blurred that distinguishing *who's who* is often hard to do.

Chameleons blend in with the backdrop. Their entire image morphs depending on where they are at any given moment. When Christian teenagers do it, they develop an "image problem," according to David Kinnaman, author of *Unchristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity*. Studying a group he calls "Mosaics," those born between 1984 and 2002, Kinnaman found that 84% of those young people knew at least one committed Christian, but only 15% of this same group could see a difference in lifestyle between themselves and their self-proclaimed Christian friends. How sad is that?



Kids don't need us to lower the standards that govern their spiritual lives, nor do they need us to share empty platitudes. No, they need a total image makeover. In 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul writes that "we are being transformed into his image." With every passing day, we're supposed to look more and more like Jesus. The church—literally "the called-out ones"—was never intended to mirror the world that so desperately needs it. But that's exactly what's happening! Kids' greatest need isn't a new message, just conformity to the old one. Talk with your teenagers about the example they set before their peers. Many of our actions are seen by others, and all of them are tied to consequences, for good or bad.

## Junior/Senior High Youth Group, Radically Active Disciples and Aldersgate News and Upcoming Events!!

### Junior and Senior High Youth Group Schedule

- Sunday Evenings from 6:30 – 8:30 unless otherwise noted, for 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders

**January 3:** Game Night at Hudson UMC! Bring your favorite board game, and a friend!

**January 10:** “*Frenemies*” – We are going to be discussing during Paul’s journeys in 2 Timothy, the theme of this youth group is “frenemies” – these reference friends of Paul’s who turned into enemies. We will also take time to discern any difficult relationships in our lives that parallel Paul’s relationships

**January 17:** Open-M Stock Up Night! Come join our Youth Leaders make TONS of sloppy joe, cookies and go grocery shopping for Open-M to help out needy families in downtown Akron!

**January 24:** Whirleyball and LaserTag Outing in Bedford, OH – bring a friend!

**January 31:** “Expect *WHAT?*” – As Christians, just as followers of any faith, we are bound to face suffering/persecution at some point in our lives, “*Christians determined to follow Christ in a secular world live their lives at the point of struggle.*” (Shafer pg. 140) However, we are supported by the God of strength and comfort – come and find out what that means for us.

### Radically Active Disciples!

- RAD is the first Sunday of every month, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted, and is for 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Youth are welcome and encouraged to bring a friend!
- **January 3, 2010:** Game Night! Bring your favorite board game to play, and we will think about the question, “In God’s eyes are there ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ or not?”

### Aldersgate Choir

Aldersgate choir is for 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders who want to get more involved in skits and singing in our church services! Upcoming rehearsals are:

- January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> from 5 – 6 p.m.

### Important Upcoming Events!

- **January 18:** (No School – President’s Day) Junior High Service Project Outing to Open-M in downtown Akron. Please contact Jill Centrello if you are interested in going.

-**January 24:** WhirleyBall and LaserTag Youth Group Outing!

-**January 29:** WinterJam Tour Spectacular! Christian Music’s Largest Annual Tour! Third Day, NewSong, Tenth Avenue North, Fireflight, Sidewalk Prophets and many others! If you are interested in attending and/or being a chaperone for this event, please let Sarah Hennessy know! Tickets are \$10 at the door, begins at 7:00 p.m. at The Wolstein Center.

- **February 7:** Youth Musical Sunday, 9:00 and 11:15 service! Our theme this year is: *Faith, Hope and Love.*

# January 2010

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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5 – 6: Aldersgate Choir 6:30 – 8:30 RAD Junior and Senior High Youth Group GAME NIGHT!			7:45 – 8:45 Breakfast Club at Panera in Hudson			
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
5-6: Aldersgate Choir 6:30 – 8:30 Junior and Senior High Youth Group: FRENEMIES!			7:45 – 8:45 Breakfast Club at Panera in Hudson			
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
5-6: Aldersgate Choir 6:30 – 8:30 Junior and Senior High Youth Group, Stock-Up for Open-M!			7:45 – 8:45 Breakfast Club at Panera in Hudson  Sarah is back in office from Russia!	3-4:30 p.m. After-school Hang outs in the Youth Office with Sarah!		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
5-6: Aldersgate Choir 6 – 9: Whirleyball and LaserTag for Junior and Senior High!	3-4:30 p.m. After-school Hang outs in the Youth Office with Sarah!		7:45 – 8:45 Breakfast Club at Panera in Hudson	3-4:30 p.m. After-school Hang outs in the Youth Office with Sarah!	7 p.m. – WinterJam 2010 Tour Spectacular, Christian Music's Largerst Annual Tour!	
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5-6: Aldersgate Choir 6:30-8:30 Junior and Senior High Youth Group: Expect WHAT!?						

