

Family Discipleship

Conversation Guide

Social Media

Social media has changed our world. It affects our relationships, priorities, self-image, self-worth, and time management. It allows people to connect, communicate, and express themselves—but also to bully, belittle, and hate.

1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” How can Christians use social media in a God-pleasing way and for his glory?

Some social media apps portray unrealistic versions of people’s lives, leading others to feel inadequate in comparison. Jesus said, “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48) But he wasn’t referring to looking perfect.

What this video about worldly perfection: 

Discuss: What is the difference between the perfection Jesus speaks of and the world’s view of perfection? Which social media apps are more likely to lead to comparison and perfectionism, and which are used in more honest and authentic ways?

Social media can connect us to a lot of other people, but often without actually building relationships. Followers, likes, and snap streaks equate to popularity and self-worth.

Jesus said, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:34) Jesus was present and compassionate with the people he encountered, and as his disciples, we are to be too.

Discuss: How can we better use social media to build relationships and love one another as God loves us?

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for the blessings you’ve given us through technology. Forgive us for the times we’ve failed to use these tools in ways that are pleasing to you. Help us to take every opportunity to love others as you love us, and to see our worth in our identity as your children. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Discuss: Parents, ask your son/daughter which social media app they use most and why. (Ask them to show you how to use it if you don’t know.)

Use the following Family Technology Contract to help guide God-pleasing use of technology in your family.

Links, videos, and quotes contained within this guide do not necessarily represent the teachings of Grace Ev. Lutheran Church and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS).

Family Technology Contract

Date _____ (review annually)

Student: I understand that the rules in this contract are for my safety and well-being. I understand that my parents love me immensely and unconditionally. I understand that they want to give me freedom while protecting me and helping me learn to make wise decisions. *Initial:* _____

Parents: I intend to use this contract to make expectations around technology use clear for our entire family and to help us disciple our kids. We will strive to model wise technology use at all times and adjust our own use of technology as needed to do so. *Initial:* _____

Student: I will share all my passwords with my parents. I understand they have a right to look at my devices/accounts for any reason and without my permission. *Initial:* _____

Parents: I will be open about the fact that I check my son/daughter's accounts regularly. This is not because I want to spy on him/her, but because I love him/her and am concerned about his/her safety and well-being. *Initial:* _____

Parents & Student: I will turn off all devices by _____ pm each school/work night and _____ pm each non-school/work night. I will store all my devices outside of my bedroom in the <fill in common area>. *Initial:* _____

Student: I will get my parents' permission before downloading/opening an account with any app/website. I agree to keep my settings private at all times. I understand reasonable restrictions may be placed on my use of various apps (or access removed if deemed necessary), and that this is for my benefit. If I feel any restrictions are unfair or impractical, I promise to ask my parents to discuss/reconsider the options instead of breaking the rules. *Initial:* _____

Parents: I will be open to discuss any rules around technology and reconsider rules that may be causing social or emotional hardship for my son/daughter. *Initial:* _____

Student: I will not use social media to tease, mock, bully, harass, or otherwise inflict harm on anyone. I will use it to communicate with friends in a respectful and encouraging way. I will immediately inform my parents if anyone I know is bullying or tormenting someone online, or if I think someone I know could cause harm to themselves or others. *Initial:* _____

Parents: I will listen non-judgmentally to any concerns my son/daughter brings to me regarding online behavior and do my best to help them resolve the issue. *Initial:* _____

Student: I will never share personal information about myself (such as name, address, phone number) online without my parents' permission. I will also notify my parents immediately if I receive suspicious or alarming messages. This is for my safety. *Initial:* _____

Student: I understand that inappropriate behavior on social media could reflect poorly on me and my family for many years to come. This includes using inappropriate language or posting photos that could be embarrassing to me and/or others. *Initial:* _____

Parents: I will model wise and mature use of social media for my son/daughter. *Initial:* _____

Student: I agree not to view pornography. I understand that pornography is as addictive as illegal drugs and can cause drastic and lasting changes in brain structure and function. It is not safe for anyone at any age and it is not God-pleasing. I understand I am very likely to encounter pornography without looking for it, and I will close the screen/app/device immediately if that happens because I cannot un-see things. *Initial:* _____

Parents: I will be open to discuss any questions or issues regarding pornography with my son/daughter in a loving and non-judgmental way. *Initial:* _____

Students: I will not send nude or sexualized photos of myself or anyone else to anyone or ask anyone to send such photos to me. If I am ever pressured or threatened to send such photos or know someone who is, I will discuss this with my parents immediately. *Initial:* _____

Parents: I will be open to discuss any questions or issues regarding sexting with my son/daughter and lovingly help in whatever way is needed. *Initial:* _____

Parents and Student: I will never text and drive. *Initial:* _____

Student signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent signature: _____ **Date:** _____