



< #teenfeed



A parent newsletter designed to help you better understand and relate to today's youth culture and your church's teenagers—including your own.



Culture Watch

Christmas is right around the corner! Hard to believe, isn't it? On the other hand, the store displays and the music we hear have been telling us it's coming for a while now. For many families, the Christmas holidays mean more time together. Kids are out of school for a few days and family gatherings are being planned. This extra time together also means more opportunities to talk with our teens.

While this is a good thing, many people find that talking with their teens is difficult. We sometimes seem to be from different planets and speaking different languages. It often seems that we have to drag information out of them.

Let's go the extra mile this Christmas season to spend quality time with our teens. Let's work to

connect with them and get below the surface to deeper communication with them. Let's look for things to do together that may open the doors of communication. Let's take the lead and open up about our own feelings and things we care deeply about, and give our teens opportunities to do the same. Let's communicate this Christmas. **Turn to The Flip Side for more. >**

#HumbleBrag

Teens doing awesome things!

In January of 2020, Emily Chaney, then a sophomore at East Ridge High School in Lick Creek, Kentucky, was invited to the Oval Office to talk with President Trump about the prayer locker in her school. Students had been invited to write their prayer requests and drop them in the locker so she and other students could pray for them. Emily often got nine or ten requests from classmates in a day. When another organization objected and the prayer lockers in their county were taken down, Emily and others organized a "Pray Anyway" campaign to pray on their own, making all of the Christian students' lockers into prayer lockers. Emily was glad she was able to stand up for her own First Amendment rights and to see God at work in her school.





> The Flip Side

So what causes some of the difficulty we sometimes have when communicating with our teens? According to the Center for Parent/Youth Understanding (CPYU), Dr. Wayne Mack gives some helpful advice for what not to do in his book, *Your Family God's Way*. Following are what he calls "circuit jammers to family communication" that make it more difficult to talk with our teens.

Constant negativity. Let's look for and affirm positive characteristics in our teens rather than always complaining and finding fault.

Assuming they mean something different. Avoid making your teens feel that you are reading their minds instead of taking what they say at face value. Ask clarifying questions to help you understand what they are trying to say.

Tearing down rather than building up. Avoid statements like "You're just stupid" or "You are driving me crazy." Choose to build up rather than tear down.

Surface-level communication. Work to get beyond the superficial to feelings, beliefs, and concerns. Talk deeply about the Bible, current events, and your teen's concerns.

Thoughtless responses. Be sure to think before you speak. First impressions and off-the-cuff responses are often detrimental to good communication.

Let's avoid these negative patterns this Christmas season and enjoy some great conversations with our teens.

on the calendar

Dec 4 National Cookie Day	Jan 4 National Spaghetti Day
Dec 8 National Brownie Day	Jan 29 National Corn Chip Day
Dec 15 National Cupcake Day	Feb 1 National Eat Ice Cream for Breakfast Day
Dec 19 National Hard Candy Day	Feb 25 National Pancake Day
Dec 30 National Bacon Day	

Yes, there's a lot of food on the calendar this season! Enjoy celebrating every holiday and try some new flavors to make it more fun! (Have you ever tried Maple Bacon cupcakes?) This is a great time to share with neighbors and community helpers.

The articles in *Forward* and *Velocity* magazines provide great discussion starters for you and your teen. Also, devotions for teens cover the same Scripture as the adult devotions in *Fusion Family* and *Fusion Next*, creating opportunities for family Bible study. Read them, discuss them, and use them as a tool for discipleship in the home.