

## TOPIC: Social Media

Name: "Don't Get Trapped in the Web"

The goal of the meeting: for teens to approach the Internet with a moral compass

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### INTRO

#### Videos:

You can start by showing something funny on YouTube

### QUESTIONS

To help the leader prepare, **possible** answers are given after each question in italics. The purpose of the discussion is for the young people to express **their** thoughts. Leaders should mostly share their ideas at the end of the discussion.

1. What do you particularly like about online communication? (Write down the kids' answers in the first column: "pros" of networking)

*Quick connection with friends; help from friends with homework; sometimes it's easier to speak up online; it's always available; keep up from people in different places; easier to find others with similar interests.*

2. What do you dislike about online communication? (Write down the kids' answers in the second column: "cons" of networking).

*Easy to have misunderstandings and conflicts; can't see the other person's body language or hear tone of voice; takes more time to write than talk; difficult to have several conversations going at the same time; can take away from in-person friendships.*

3. On social media, are you usually more or less open? Why?

*More open: easier to be clear and straightforward when writing  
Less open: can't see the other person's reaction*

4. What kind of relational problems can social media create?

*Possible examples: a girl has texted with a guy three or four times and assumes they are already in a relationship but the guy doesn't think that; someone doesn't answer right away, causing another to think there's a problem when there isn't, etc.*

5. Describe an ideal friendship (not just online). (Write down the kids' answers.)  
*Time spent together; shared experiences and memories; trust; honesty; support in difficult situations; forgiveness; understanding; willingness to help each other; easy to talk to each other*

6. Which of the above can be accomplished in social networks and which can only be accomplished in real life?

*Some of them can be accomplished online; friendships can be deepened between two who are both in-person friends besides talking online; it takes in-person time to have shared experiences; truly understanding someone is difficult if they have never been around to show facial expressions/body language/etc. for someone to see in a variety of contexts; online a person only shows what they want people to see.*

7. Do people hold themselves to the same standards online as they do in real life? Why do some people say things online that they would not say in person? What is the difference?

*Online does not seem like real life; there is no supervision online; no one can really feel/see the first reactions of the people seeing what is posted*

8. How can someone keep from seeing porn and other inappropriate content online?

*If it pops up click something else right away; use devices in a common area of the house at home; use filter settings and/or other filtering apps; be accountable to someone*

9. How do feelings of loneliness impact social media use?

*Lonely people aren't as busy with people which leads to more time online; they don't know how to spend their time without being online; they search for new friends online; they engage with social media so that they don't feel empty inside.*

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## **WRAP-UP**

1. The Internet is neither good nor bad. It all depends on how we use it (mention their answers to questions #1 and #2).

2. Online communication helps us to keep in touch, especially with those who live far away. But online communication should not keep us from trying to find or deepen face to face relationships.

3. It is important not to lower our moral standards when communicating online. There are real people being affected by what we say.

The way we spend our time and the ways social media impacts our lives are important to God. He wants us to flee the bad stuff and hold on to what is good in every part of our lives:

*Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. (Colossians 3:5 NIV)*

*But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices. (Colossians 3:8-9 NIV)*

*And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:17 NIV)*

God doesn't want to be just a part of our lives - He wants to be included even in our online communication.

It's been said that our character is best revealed when no one can see us. What are we doing online when "no one can see us"?

Let's consider how God can be pleased even in our use of social media.