

## BIG IDEA

Teach and model healthy technology habits that preschoolers can develop as they grow.



### KEY SCRIPTURES

- *God does not want us to waste our time* (Eph. 5:15-16).
- *God is the most important* (Matt. 6:33).
- *God wants us to trust in Him* (Ps. 37:5).
- *God want us to make good decisions* (1 Cor. 6:12).
- *God wants us to do everything for Him* (1 Cor. 10:31).



### KEY QUESTIONS YOUR PRESCHOOLER IS ASKING

- Why can't I play my game on the tablet whenever I want?
- Why can't I watch that movie?
- Why can't I do what my older brother or sister does?



### AT THIS AGE MOST PRESCHOOLERS WILL ...

- Understand the technology of smartphones and tablets.
- Refine fine motor skills via touch screens.
- Develop longer attention spans.



### DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- Preschoolers' minds are incredibly impressionable, so nearly everything they see or experience makes an impact on their development. For this reason, it is important that you strictly limit and control their intake of media or technology.
- Children at this age often have lots of energy and likely have trouble sitting still. Rather than using a tablet or television to occupy your child, provide alternatives, like playing a board game, reading, coloring, or playing outside. Hands-on creative play is essential for healthy development. Too much screen time for children has also been found to have a negative effect on brain development.
- At this age children are developing hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills. Apps and games that encourage these skills will benefit your child when she begins to write, play sports, or learn an instrument. Research educational apps that will further your child's set of skills or interests.



## COACHING TIPS

- Although it can be tempting to use technology as a quick babysitter, interactive media is most beneficial when collaborative. Interactive technology engages your child more than television, but making the game interpersonal will employ even more areas of the brain. Talk through the game with your child, discussing his problem-solving strategies and approaches. Be sure to use apps appropriate for your child's age range and milestones, and test them before your child plays them.
- As always, setting a good example is the most effective teaching tool. Exhibit healthy habits, like not using your phone during meals or turning the TV off when it isn't being used. Emphasize spending time together as a family instead of being too glued to technology. The earlier in life that healthy habits are established, the better. Be sure your child does not become dependent upon technology as a means for curing boredom, problem solving, or entertainment in general.
- Set clear time limits and boundaries for your child's technology use. For preschoolers, 20 to 30 minutes of screen time twice a day is the recommended maximum. Treat screen time and TV as a special privilege rather than something they expect or feel entitled to have. This way your child understands priorities and learns not to depend on technology.



## CONVERSATION STARTERS

- **WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL HAPPEN NEXT?** Make apps and games more interactive by playing them *with* your child. Prompt your child to answer questions about the game, pausing to ask what he thinks will happen next or why he made a certain decision.
- **HOW CAN THIS HELP IN REAL LIFE?** Draw comparisons between enjoyment from technology and real-life situations. Discuss what real-life things bring your child joy, and emphasize how these things can help your child grow and learn. Even while using technology, consider realistic applications your child could use with the skills she is using in technology.
- **WHAT CAN WE DO NOW THAT THE ELECTRONICS ARE OFF? HOW CAN WE USE OUR IMAGINATIONS TO PLAY?** Give your preschooler blank paper and crayons or makers, modeling clay, or LEGO® bricks—anything that you can use to create. Your imagination is the limit!



## SAY OR PRAY

- We should use our time to honor God.
- Everything we do should honor God.
- Good decisions are ones that follow God's way.
- Honoring God is the most important thing in our lives.

## BIG IDEA

Teach and model healthy technology habits that children can develop further as they grow.



### KEY SCRIPTURES

- *God does not want us to waste our time* (Eph. 5:15-16).
- *God is the most important* (Matt. 6:33).
- *God wants us to trust in Him* (Ps. 37:5).
- *God want us to make good decisions* (1 Cor. 6:12).
- *God wants us to do everything for Him* (1 Cor. 10:31).



### KEY QUESTIONS YOUR ELEMENTARY-AGED CHILD IS ASKING

- Why can't I have more screen time?
- All my friends are playing that video game. Why can't I?
- Why do you limit what I can see on the Internet?



### AT THIS AGE MOST ELEMENTARY CHILDREN WILL ...

- Become increasingly more independent.
- Have the tendency to spend prolonged amounts of time absorbed in activities that interest them.
- Rapidly develop physical, cognitive, and social skills.



### DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- Younger elementary age children need security and structure. Working together to set technology boundaries will help provide a sense of both. Involving him in your decisions also encourages his developing sense of responsibility. If your child will have access to a computer or tablet at home, insist the device be kept in a family area, and set parental controls to block inappropriate Internet access.
- Children at this age have good hand-eye coordination. Many video games and apps can stimulate that coordination, although too much time involved in these activities can limit development in other areas. Check out the games and apps your child is using to make sure they are high quality, age appropriate activities.
- Peer pressure becomes more challenging for kids at this age, as they struggle to belong and fit in. Avoid "because I said so" responses as your child seeks answers to the boundaries you set for her. Use biblical principles as you explain your decisions to limit her access to and use of technology.



## COACHING TIPS

- Remember that kids may understand technology better than you do, so they may be able to bypass controls you set up. Enlist the help of tech-savvy people to enable restrictions to safeguard your child.
- Establish a clear time limit on your child's use of technology, like one or two hours a day. Involve your child in negotiating technology time limits during a family meeting. Develop a contract to outline details. Consider allowing your child to earn extra technology time by doing something constructive, helpful, active, or creative. Help your child understand that screen time is a privilege, not something they are entitled to have.
- Set an example for your child by limiting your own use of technology. Encourage your family to observe "no technology times" in your home, like supper time. Also encourage spending family time together doing activities like hiking, working puzzles, or playing board games.



## CONVERSATION STARTERS

- **WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO TODAY?** As you and your child make plans for the upcoming day, invite her to think through activities she'd like to do. Help her to evaluate the activities and make good decisions based on quality use of her time.
- **WHAT DO YOU THINK MY JOB AS A PARENT IS?** Often kids will question why parents make the decisions they do regarding their child's activities. Help your child understand your God-given responsibility to care for and protect him. Explain that the boundaries you set are your best attempt to be the parent God wants you to be.
- **WHAT ARE YOU WATCHING (LOOKING AT, READING, PLAYING, ETC.)?** As you notice your child engaged in playing a game or looking at something on a screen, invite her to tell you about it. Look at the material yourself. Periodically checking and evaluating what your child is exposed to is a parent's right and responsibility. If the material is inappropriate, help your child understand why and take steps to avoid future access to that information.



## SAY OR PRAY

- Everything we do should honor God, including the way we use our time.
- Good decisions are ones that follow God's teachings.
- We can trust that God's ways are the best ways.

## BIG IDEA

Develop healthy technology habits in your child as she grows.



### KEY SCRIPTURES

- *God does not want us to waste our time* (Eph. 5:15-17).
- *God wants us to form our identities in Christ* (Rom. 15:5-7; Phil. 2:1-5).
- *God gives us wisdom and understanding* (Prov. 2:6).
- *We are to not be subject to technology, but use it for God's purpose* (Gen. 1:28).
- *God wants us to make good decisions* (Prov. 3:5-6; 1 Cor. 6:12).
- *God is more important than anyone or anything else* (Matt. 6:33).



### KEY QUESTIONS YOUR PRETEEN MAY ASK

- Why can't I play that game/watch that movie/visit that website?
- Can I have that?
- Why do people act differently online than they do in real life?



### AT THIS AGE MOST PRETEENS WILL ...

- Be highly literate in touchscreen interfaces and text communication.
- Be interested in movies, TV, video games, and social media platforms.
- Be coming into and exploring their identities.



### DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- Preteens will gravitate naturally toward things that connote social power, popularity, and/or acceptance. The newest technology quickly grows obsolete. Your preteen will probably want some of the newest products. Be sure to put these trends into context. This will promote a higher understanding of what needs and wants really are and increase her ability to self-limit later.
- Preteens often find themselves idling in front of a screen. This sort of behavior has been proven scientifically to have a negative effect on brain development. Talk to your child's pediatrician about wise choices. Physical health and fitness can play an important part in overall body image and emotional development.
- Even if your preteen is not using social media yet, she may want to before long. Because preteens are rigorously aware of social roles and thirst for approval, friendship, and belonging, they may see social media platforms as a way of furthering or of rounding out their identities. Help direct your preteen toward a healthy and Christlike understanding of herself.

- At this age, preteens will be approaching their athletic prime. Encourage their interests in sports as well as in other extracurricular activities.



### COACHING TIPS

- Monitor your preteen's access to the Internet and TV. If your preteen has a phone, establish rules for its use. Place computers in public areas and install software safeguards. Discuss the pros and cons of technology. Explain your reasons for boundaries, lending perspective to your authority, and helping your child understand the restrictions.
- Don't let technology dictate how you and your family do life. Use it wisely in ways that honor God and help accomplish His purpose.
- You determine what you allow your child to watch. Discuss how certain content depicts scenes, themes, or worldviews that dishonor God. Allowing your child to watch questionable content will probably be a case-by-case judgment call, but talking with your preteen helps him develop a healthy way of thinking about these things.
- Set a good example. Exhibit healthy habits yourself. Emphasize spending time together as a family instead of being glued to technology. Be sure your preteen does not become dependent upon technology as a means for curing boredom, problem solving, or entertainment in general.



### CONVERSATION STARTERS

- **HAVE YOU FINISHED YOUR HOMEWORK?** Create a healthy balance with technology by making it a reward instead of a right. Make sure your preteen knows that many things take priority over a favorite show, game, or website. Quiet time, Bible study, physical play, sports, reading, and hanging out with friends are more important than screen time.
- **WHAT ARE YOUR FRIENDS INTERESTED IN?** This question will help you take inventory of trends in popular culture that may be influencing your preteen. Oftentimes, these trends are OK, but some could be problematic and require discussing with your child.
- **HOW CAN THIS HELP IN REAL LIFE?** Discuss what real-life things bring joy to your child and emphasize how these things can help your child grow and learn. Consider how your child could use the skills she is mastering with technology to help others and honor God.



### SAY OR PRAY

- Everything we do should please God.
- Honoring God is the most important thing in life.
- We can use technology to glorify God.

## BIG IDEA

Middle schoolers should use technology in healthy, God-honoring ways.



### KEY SCRIPTURES

- *We should be discerning when it comes to our use of technology* (1 Chron. 12:32).
- *We should reflect Christ in what we communicate online* (Prov. 17:27).
- *We should be above reproach with what we allow into our lives* (Ps. 101:1-3).
- *Nothing should be our master except Jesus* (1 Cor. 6:12).



### KEY QUESTIONS YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOLER IS ASKING

- When can I get a Facebook (Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram) account?
- Why do I need boundaries when it comes to video games and social media?
- How can I get more likes and comments on my pictures and posts?



### AT THIS AGE MOST MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS WILL ...

- Feel pressured from their peer group to become more involved on social media.
- Begin to see access to social media as a rite of passage in today's culture.
- See social structures very differently because of social media than generations of the past.
- Live out desires of adventure and fantasy through means of video games and virtual reality.



### DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- In middle school, students often strengthen their problem-solving and thinking skills. They may pay more attention to making decisions, including helping to set their own boundaries with technology and social media. They are able to go through “what if” scenarios and talk through potential challenges with technology.
- Middle school is a time of major social and emotional growth. They are often sensitive to the opinions and reactions of others and may think the whole world is watching them. Their self-image can also take a hit if they are disappointed in the number of likes they receive on social media.
- Middle schoolers are part of the technological generation. They are not intimidated by new technology and are usually more tech-savvy than their parents.



## COACHING TIPS

- While setting boundaries may be difficult, by doing so you are demonstrating your love for your child. Set godly standards for technology use in your home that are clear. Limit the amount of access to the Internet that you give your child. You can give your middle schooler opportunity to speak into the boundaries, but keep in mind you are the parent and you are accountable.
- Social media is not all negative, but it can be a destructive force in your middle schooler's life if not kept in perspective and regulated. You might want to limit the social platforms your middle schooler is allowed to be on and maintain watch over those accounts. Remember, if you have provided your middle schooler with a phone, it's not his, it's yours. That gives you the right to know how it's being used.
- Inform your middle schooler that much damage has been done through inappropriate emails and text messages. Help your middle schooler understand the need to be careful about what we say and post. Proverbs 17:27 reminds us that fewer words are better than many, and "one who keeps a cool head is a person of understanding." When it comes to social media, never write something in anger.
- Point out that technology in and of itself is not a negative thing. Discuss how to use this tool to honor God and further the gospel.



## CONVERSATION STARTERS

- **HOW ARE YOUR FRIENDS USING SOCIAL MEDIA?** Learn how prevalent social media is among your middle schooler's friends, and identify the latest and most popular platform being used. You can follow up by asking how social media can be used to honor God.
- **WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE SOME DANGERS OF TECHNOLOGY?** Make sure to give your middle schooler time to answer before unloading your list. Remember, this is a conversation, not a lecture. After you discuss the dangers, talk about how to use technology wisely and for good.
- **WHAT ARE YOU LEARNING IN YOUR QUIET TIME?** Instead of a frontal attack on time spent on technology versus time with God, approach the subject in this way. Talk with your middle schooler about what he's studying in his devotional time and how you can help this time be more meaningful to him. It's likely that part of the conversation will move to stewardship of time.



## SAY OR PRAY

- Pray that God would give you and your middle schooler the grace and wisdom to use technology in a way that honors Him.
- Pray for protection for your middle schooler's eyes, ears, and heart as she engages in technology and social media. Ask God to make her sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading and to give her courage to walk away from situations, people, or places where technology is being used in an ungodly way.

## BIG IDEA

High schoolers should use technology in healthy, God-honoring ways.



### KEY SCRIPTURES

- *We should be discerning when it comes to our use of technology* (1 Chron. 12:32).
- *We should reflect Christ in what we communicate online* (Prov. 17:27).
- *We should be above reproach with what we allow into our lives* (Ps. 101:1-3).
- *Nothing should be our master except Jesus* (1 Cor. 6:12).



### KEY QUESTIONS YOUR HIGH SCHOOLER IS ASKING

- How can I gain more friends and followers on social media?
- When can I update my phone?
- What's wrong with sharing personal things on social media?



### AT THIS AGE MOST HIGH SCHOOLERS WILL ...

- Have a smartphone and be closely attached to it.
- Live in a tech-saturated environment, whether they are at home, at school, on the job, and so forth.
- Live out desires of adventure and fantasy through means of video games and virtual reality.
- Be more tech-savvy than their parents.



### DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- Even though high schoolers are growing in maturity, they still struggle to weigh the consequences of their actions. This can result in social media choices that hurt others and reflect badly on themselves.
- High schoolers have the ability to self-regulate their technology use but may struggle to do so. While they may outwardly balk at boundaries placed around technology, most will inwardly welcome the protection and direction.
- Most high schoolers have never known a time when technology was not part of their lives. So while parents and other adults may struggle to adjust to new and fast-paced technological advances, they take it in stride as part of normal living.



## COACHING TIPS

- Be wise about the technology access you give to your high schooler. Lay ground rules for phone and technology use. Provide opportunity for him to speak into these boundaries. Encourage your high schooler to be more discerning about his use of technology and a little less passive in his consumption.
- Be aware and alert to the changing apps and social media that high schoolers are using. You don't need to be proficient on every app or be on every social media platform, but keep a good source for this information close, probably someone just a bit older than your high schooler.
- Remind your high schooler that her value and significance is not found in how many friends and followers she has on social media. Keep pointing her to who she is in Christ as the center point in life.
- Monitor your own use of technology. Remember you are setting the example in front of your high schooler about healthy technology use. Make sure it is not dominating your own life before you begin to set standards and boundaries for your high schooler.



## CONVERSATION STARTERS

- **WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE APP (OR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM)? WHY?** This answer may give you insight into what is popular among high schoolers and how your high schooler is using his technology. Try not to pass quick judgment on his response. You may need to spend some time researching the information he shares before you talk with him about what he's using.
- **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE DANGERS OF TECHNOLOGY?** It will be interesting to see if your high schooler is aware of how dangerous technology can be. If she is oblivious, find ways to highlight the dangers without condemnation.
- **WHAT ARE SOME WAYS TECHNOLOGY CAN BE USED FOR GOOD?** You don't want to always come across negative about technology. It is here to stay and will have a significant affect on all of our lives. Discuss things you could do as a family to use technology for good and the gospel.



## SAY OR PRAY

- Pray that your high schooler would make wise choices about his use of technology.
- Pray your high schooler would find her value and significance in Christ, not in how many followers she has on social media.
- Pray that you would practice self-control when it comes to technology and be a good example of godly technology use.

## BIG IDEA

Young adults should use technology in healthy, God-honoring ways.



### KEY SCRIPTURES

- *We should be discerning when it comes to our use of technology* (1 Chron. 12:32).
- *We should reflect Christ in what we communicate online* (Prov. 17:27).
- *We should be above reproach with what we allow into our lives* (Ps. 101:1-3).
- *Nothing should be our master except Jesus* (1 Cor. 6:12).



### KEY QUESTIONS YOUR YOUNG ADULT IS ASKING

- How can I gain more friends and followers on social media and become more significant?
- Why do I determine my self-worth on the basis of how many friends or followers I have or by how many likes I get on social media?
- How can I keep technology from dominating my life?
- Is social media all bad?



### AT THIS AGE MOST YOUNG ADULTS WILL ...

- Have several ways to access the Internet.
- Be totally attached to their phones but will likely admit they spend too much time on them.
- Understand how social media can be used to leverage their social status.
- Be able to navigate several different social media platforms.



### DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- With greater independence, young adults don't have as much, if any, parental restraints around their use of technology. They must self-discipline in this area.
- While young adults now have unlimited access to the Internet, they have to determine for themselves whether they will allow the Internet to have total access to them. They have the ability not to allow technology to dominate their lives.
- Young adults will continue to struggle with the consequences of what they post on social media or have posted in the past.



### COACHING TIPS

- Young adults are still looking to their parents for guidance and examples of how they live. Since this is the case, make sure you're modeling Christ-honoring technology use. Don't send mixed messages, saying one thing, but practicing another.
- While there are many negative things about technology, there are ways it can be used for good. Initiate creative conversations about how technology can be used in positive ways, including how to use it to further the gospel.
- Remind your young adult that there are countless stories about people who didn't get jobs or lost their jobs because of remarks they made in emails or posted online. Caution your young adult to use restraint and carefully consider what he posts.
- Help your young adult understand how big a time waster technology can be. Point out how it can hinder her relationship with God, blind her from seeing people in need, and limit her in building meaningful relationships.
- While you don't have to use all the technology, try to stay abreast of what your young adult may be using, especially as it pertains to social media.
- Remember, if you pay the bill for your young adult's phone, you have the right to know what's on it and how it's being used.



### CONVERSATION STARTERS

- **WHAT DO YOU SEE AS SOME DANGERS OF TECHNOLOGY?** It's easy to get pulled into the technological world without fully seeing the negatives. This conversation can be enlightening for you but can also help your young adult be more aware of the pitfalls of technology.
- **HOW CAN SOCIAL MEDIA BE CONSUMING?** This non-threatening question can easily lead to how social media is consuming them. This information may need to be read between the lines of what is actually said. Be discerning.
- **HOW ARE YOU SEEING TECHNOLOGY BEING USED FOR GOOD?** Discuss the positive uses of technology and how you both can honor God with your technology use.



### SAY OR PRAY

- Pray your young adult will have Holy Spirit-led discernment in how he views and uses technology.
- Pray your young adult continues to find significance through her relationship with Christ, not on how many social media friends and followers she has.