

# PROTECT EVERY CHILD

WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT INTERNET SAFETY FOR KIDS

## SECTION 1

BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION OF NORTH CAROLINA

# AWARENESS

## WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT INTERNET SAFETY FOR KIDS

### GETTING THE WORD OUT

- Prepare participant guides and bulletin inserts. Contact your church office about the policy for making photocopies and the deadline for putting inserts in the bulletin. Be certain to print a few extra copies for distribution to adult Sunday School class teachers. (adults with elementary, middle, and high school aged children).
- Copy the participant guide. You will need to make one copy for each participant.
- Copy the bulletin insert. You will need to make one copy for every two bulletins. Cut the inserts in half and place in the church bulletins the week before the meeting.
- Recruit volunteers to hand out the participant guides at the door on the meeting day.
- Preview this session's DVD segment and meeting plan.
- In addition to the bulletin inserts, promote this "Internet Safety" series during announcement times, in the church newsletter, on the church Web site, through Sunday School class e-mails, and at any other opportunity. Use the following information to promote this series of programs:

Remember when your children thought you were so smart? Your influence was without question and your ability to protect your children from "questionable influences" was as easy as grabbing the remote control.

That's not the case anymore. Today's teens are masters of technology in a culture sadly short on restraint. Our children need our guidance and our encouragement when it comes to navigating the minefields of digital media.

Unfortunately, many parents and guardians are a little like dinosaurs when it comes to understanding and appreciating the ways teens communicate. But never has your presence and your input been more needed.

Keeping our children safe on the Internet is a big job, but it is a task well worth the effort.

You don't have to be a technology guru to help your child set healthy and safe limits on the Internet, you just have to be willing to learn and to ask questions. Come find out more!

### GETTING STARTED

- Opening – Welcome the group. Say: The NC Baptist Men have produced a series of short programs on Internet Safety. For about the next 30 – 45 minutes, we will watch the first program on Awareness and then have a short time of discussion about what we've learned and questions we might have.
- Prayer – Pray for our children and for the privilege of being parents. Ask for God's wisdom and His direction as we seek to "train up our children in the way they should go."
- Pre-video comments – Say: Most parents probably don't realize just how much time their kids spend using technology. But many of us do assume that they know how to do it safely. We shouldn't.
- Show the Awareness segment on the DVD.
- Allow a few minutes for participants to read through the participant guide.

### CHAT IT UP

- Reminisce a little about the ways you kept up with friends versus how teens today do it. Think about the positives and the negatives.
- Are your teens multi-taskers? If so, can you share how you keep the lines of communication open?
- Any ideas about how to set limits on how and when your children use technology?
- Prayer requests?

### CLOSE

Thank the group for coming. Remind them of your next meeting date and close with prayer.

# AWARENESS

## WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT INTERNET SAFETY FOR KIDS

Keeping up with a teenager's social life used to be as easy as following the kitchen telephone cord – not anymore...

It's not that teens have fundamentally changed in the past few decades, just the way they communicate. They still thrive on interacting with friends and classmates, but now they do it at a speed that boggles the mind. No more waiting for a return phone call. Our children are out there Instant Messaging (IMing), texting, and posting – at the same time they are doing their homework and listening to their favorite tunes.

According to a 2010 study by the Kaiser Family Foundation, 8-18 year-olds devote an average of 7 hours and 38 minutes to using entertainment media each day – that's more than 53 hours a week! And because they spend so much of that time 'media multitasking' (using more than one medium at a time), they actually manage to pack a total of 10 hours and 45 minutes worth of media content into those 7½ hours.

We might assume that these media-savvy teens of ours are plenty safe navigating the Internet and sending their text messages over the airwaves. But that's just not so.

### CHECK THIS OUT

- 64% of teens say they do things online they wouldn't want their parents to know about.
- 22% of teen girls and 18% of teen boys have sent or posted nude pictures of themselves.
- 39% of teenagers have texted sexually suggestive messages.

Actually, when it comes to danger on the Internet, "most teenagers open the door themselves," said Robert Stewart of Family Foundations of NC Baptist Men. Never assume your kids know how to be safe. They need guidance and limits to help them exercise sound judgment.

- 14 percent of teens have actually met face-to-face with a person they had known only through the Internet.
- 30 percent have considered meeting someone they've only communicated with online.
- 71 percent reported receiving messages online from someone they don't know.
- 45 percent have been asked for personal information by someone they don't know.
- When teens receive messages online from someone they don't know, 40 percent usually reply and chat.
- 18 percent said they tell a parent or guardian that they received a message from someone they don't know.

Instead of fearing this new and expanding technology, Stewart suggests that parents view it as a vehicle for discipleship. The Bible talks about the urgency in which parents should talk about spiritual things with their children. The Message says it this way, "Write these commandments that I've given you today on your hearts. Get them inside of you and then get them inside your children. Talk about them wherever you are, sitting at home or walking in the street; talk about them from the time you get up in the morning to when you fall into bed at night."

Get informed. Get involved. And get talking with your kids about what they are doing on the Internet.

### HOW YOU CAN PRAY

Please take this guide home as a reminder to pray for our children and for people like Mary Conyers who are working to protect children and educate parents on Internet safety.

- Ask God for opportunities to share your questions and concerns with your children.
- Pray for wisdom and discernment as you seek to guide and disciple your child.

### HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

It's important that our children see that we are taking an active role in understanding and using the technology that occupies so much of their time. If your child is IMing, think about setting up your own screen name and putting them on your buddy list.

### ABBREVIATIONS TO GET YOU STARTED

Only parents type in complete sentences and use proper punctuation – kids think it is very funny.

**lol** = laughing out loud  
**brb** = be right back  
**btw** = by the way  
**sup** = what's up  
**idk** = I don't know  
**ltr or l8r** = later  
**otp** = on the phone  
**np** = no problem  
**jk** = just kidding  
**ttyl** = talk to you later  
**thx** = thanks  
**np** = no problem  
**gtg** = got to go  
**rents** = parents

**sys** = see you soon  
**zzz** = tired, bored

### POSSIBLE WARNINGS

**pos** = parent over shoulder  
**mos** = mom over shoulder  
**p911** = parent alert  
**paw** = parents are watching  
**a/s/l** = age, sex, location  
 (often asked by predators)  
**nifoc** = naked in front of computer  
**420** = code for buying or smoking marijuana