



# PARENT CONNECT

A BRIDGE BETWEEN PARENTS AND YOUTH MINISTRY



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**The Edge New Year Kickoff in the Caribbean @ the Edge All Inclusive Resort**

January 12  
7-9pm

**F56 Kickoff**

January 15  
6:30-8pm

**Legacy Youth Conference**

March 11-14, 2016  
(Grades 9-12)  
Registrations available January 12,

## WHEN SPORTS TAKE OVER

Kids are busier than ever. Between hefty homework loads, after-school jobs, and family commitments, it's a wonder they have time for anything else. Enter extracurriculars such as sports, clubs, band, etc. It can be a struggle to find balance.

Consider these tips as you teach your teens how to pursue a healthy balance in their schedules:

1. Identify the two or three main things that should command the most attention. What are the primary priorities of your student and the family? Pursue those with passion.
2. Say no to good things in order to pursue the best things. It's okay to limit involvement and say no to opportunities that don't mesh with the family calendar.
3. Provide occasional mental-health days. Even when balance is marginally within sight, schedules can be hectic. Whether it's a school "skip" day, a tech-free Saturday, or an intentional Netflix

binge on a school night, everyone needs time to mentally detox.

4. Let adequate sleep and a healthy diet be the primary fuel for success. Many teens turn to all-nighters and Red Bull to make it through an intense week of finals or the stress of playoffs. But in the long run, they become less effective than if they'd rested and eaten well.

5. Faith formation matters, so don't neglect church during busy times. Staying connected to God and your faith community can make all the difference in managing the stress of a difficult schedule.

Whether your kids are into sports, dance, music, a serious romance, an after-school job, or fill-in-the-blank, the most empowering word from a parent can be "no." It sets teenagers up for future success in prioritizing their passions.



By Darren Sutton



## YOUTH CULTURE

### A WORD FROM THE WORD

And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. Hebrews 10:25, NLT



## H.A.B.I.T.S THAT STICK

As parents guide our teenagers toward a firmer faith foundation, we can model and encourage some habits that will solidify their walk with Jesus:

**Hang time with God**—Through prayer, worship, and personal Bible reading, young people start developing a “presence of Jesus” mindset throughout their day-to-day life.

**Accountability**—Temptation has never been greater, and access to distraction has never been broader. We all need relationships with people who help us stay focused on what matters most.

**Bible study**—Apps such as YouVersion make it easier than ever to take a more intentional look at what the Bible says. Many teens say the most impactful example their parents set is reading the Bible daily.

**Involvement in ministry**—With many schools requiring

volunteer hours for graduation, serving has become second nature to most teens. It’s critical to connect that time to a purpose beyond “getting the job done” or “filling an empty spot.”

**Tithing**—No one likes talking about money at church... except Jesus. He addressed it more than any other topic. Teaching your kids the principles of giving and tithing at an early age (and an early paycheck) almost ensures they’ll continue that practice when they’re grown and making “real” money of their own.

**Sharing Faith**—“Go forth and make disciples” wasn’t a suggestion. Those were Jesus’ final words to his followers. We all need to share the reason for the hope we have in him!

By Darren Sutton

### WHY YOUTH GROUP MATTERS

Dare 2 Share president Greg Stier offers five reasons parents should keep their kids involved in youth group:

Teenagers need models and mentors. They need additional adults in their lives reinforcing the spiritual habits they’re learning from you.

Teenagers need community. They benefit from friends who challenge them in all the right ways.

Teenagers need mission. The “activist” wiring of this generation makes them great Gospel-sharers.

Teenagers need theology. Learning about their faith helps kids own it in a personal way.

Teenagers need a safe place to confess and confide. Accountability with friends often gives young people the courage to confess at home.



# IN THEIR WORLD

## WHAT'S HAPPENING 'AFTER SCHOOL'?

A new app geared toward teens is sweeping high school campuses across America. After School lets kids post anonymously to a message board geared directly toward their high school.

After School limits its audience by using Facebook accounts to verify high school attendance. Parents or other adults would have to pose as teens to gain access, but even then, algorithms are designed to prevent that.

Currently, between 2 and 10 million teenagers use After School, according to its creators.

As with similar apps, the uncensored, anonymous exchange of ideas has given way to bullying, hypersexualized content, and threats of violence against other students. Parents need to decide if they'll let their kids use an app that's tough to monitor.



## UNLOCKING THE SECRET OF VAULT APPS

Designed to protect passwords, account numbers, and the like, vault apps have been hijacked by teenagers as a way to hide everything from nude photos to illicit text messages.

On initial inspection, these apps look like a calculator or other common smartphone feature. And they function as a normal app unless the correct password is entered. Then they open like a picked safe, storing the users' most secret possessions.

Enabling parental controls on a phone is the first step in defending against this type of subterfuge. Setting the "ask to buy" feature means parents will be notified before kids can download any app.

CommonSenseMedia.org provides parents with safety and sleuthing tips regarding the latest technology. The site encourages several accountability measures with smartphones:

- Constantly discuss phone safety, rules, and responsibilities with your teen.
- Don't assume the worst if your teen has a vault app, but don't naively dismiss such apps, either. Ask why they're there.
- On iPhones, go to Settings -> Privacy -> Camera to see which apps have used the camera. This will reveal any camera apps disguised as something else.

Remember: You're raising the most tech-savvy generation in history. Teenagers will experiment and explore simply because this technology exists. So talk with your kids, discussing the wisdom of having anything on a phone that needs to be hidden. Require passwords when necessary. And be smarter than the smartphones we're all working with.

# JAN 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
		The Edge Kickoff in the Caribbean! 7-9pm Grades 7-12			F56 Pre-Teen Kickoff 6:30-8pm Grades 5-6	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
		The Edge Youth Ministry 7-9pm (Grades 7-12)				
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
		The Edge Youth Ministry 7-9pm (Grades 7-12)		Worship Night - Grades 10- Young Adults 7-9pm	F56 Pre-Teen Kickoff 6:30-8pm Grades 5-6	
31	1	2	3	4	5	6



Dear Parent(s) and Guardian(s), Happy New Year!

As you and yours start making (and breaking) New Year's resolutions, know that we're as committed as ever to loving and learning with and from your family.

We're praying that Jesus will remain at the center of your homes, jobs, and schools during this new year. May he supply all your needs and challenge you to grow and develop in faith, family, and friendship.

We love, appreciate, and pray for you and your kids. Thanks for starting 2016 with us. May it be the best one yet!

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