

# Social Media For Christian Teens Class Outline

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## Part 1: Social Media & Your Faith – Who Are You Online?

**Objective:** Help students understand how their faith should shape their social media presence.

### Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (5 to 10 min)

- Ask: “What’s your favorite social media platform and why?”
- Have a white board and have kids name off the social media outlets they are own.
  - Let the kids name them off but a good list is Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Locket, BeReal, TikTok, they may name others.
- As they name each one, list the main purpose of each (i.e. Pinterest is craft ideas, IG is photos and videos), list if possible who is the owner / founder (i.e. TikTok is China)
- Once you have gotten a good list, go through each one and ask how many kids are on each one so you get a feel for what their most popular outlet is, and write the total down for each.
- Don’t forget to include a column for “No social media”
- Once you have tallied up who’s on what outlets, then ask the group to go through and label each one “Risky”, “Average Risk”, and “Safe” and get their thoughts and feelings about the safety level of each.

### Biblical Foundation (5 min)

**Key verse:** Matthew 5:16 – “Let your light shine before others.”

Discussion: How can we be a light on social media? How are some ways you may NOT be a light?

- Examples: Ask the students if they have ever seen a fellow student or a parent posting something ugly or controversial on Facebook. (i.e. maybe disagreeing with the outcome of a sporting event, sharing gossip about someone, criticizing a coach or teacher, etc). How did that make you feel? What did you think of that person?
- Example: Have you ever seen posts where people are posting vague posts trying to draw attention? Thoughts on that.
- Example: What about posts where people are constantly bragging about themselves? How do you feel about those type posts?
- Example: What about political / opinion posts.
- Examples of Good: Judd Cullers daily facebook devotional (This is a friend of mine that posts a daily morning devotional on Facebook and I have liked and commented it so much, pretty much every morning when I open up Facebook it’s the first thing I see and it is a great way to start the day).
- Example: Participating in online christian groups

Discussion Question:

Jesus and communication—How would He use social media today?

This is one that will have split opinions. It's a great discussion.

Would Jesus be on social media?

- Those who say no, the approach is that Jesus did not engage in self centered activities. Jesus was never about just putting himself in the spotlight or seeking attention. Jesus did not brag.
- Those who say yes, equate social media to how Jesus taught with parables, and used the practice of asking questions to help teach and communicate.
- If Jesus commented on social media, he would almost certainly have posted thought-provoking questions.
- Second, Jesus would engage those with a small following. Jesus himself may have had a small following, and that is okay. Being a light on social media is not about quantity it is about quality.

### **Social Media as a Reflection of Your Identity (5 min)**

White board discussion: If you were asked to name the things you love about your best friends - what would those be?

Examples people usually say are: fun, trustworthy, loyal, shares the same interest, etc.

“What do you think your social media says about you?”

If someone you meet for the very first time pulls up your social media - what are three things they would observe about you? Would they observe the traits that you are looking for in a friend?

Are you portraying your real self, or just what people want to see?

- *Am I making a name for myself? Or is God's name being made great through my social media?*
- The temptation of comparison (Galatians 1:10 – pleasing God vs. people).
- Scroll through your feed: Are you posting things that reflect your values?
  - I make a point to intentionally scroll through my news feed once a week. Is everything I posted something I'm comfortable with everyone seeing? Is what I'm posting show people a Christina lifestyle?
  - Do I need to delete any posts off my feed that looking back, do not shine a light?
- How do you correct or point out to someone that their posts may be unacceptable?
  - Asking someone if they are okay? “You seem to be posting a lot of messages that are troubling. Are you okay? Can I help you with anything?”

## Part 2: The Dangers & Discernment of Social Media

Objective: Get students thinking about red flags they may see and how to handle them.

**Opening discussion / White board:** What are some dangers of social media? (Let's list them on the board. Students can share examples and teachers can fill in any ones they missed.) Talk through them one at a time. If possible, give examples that you or the students may have experienced.

- Cyberbullying
- Comparison
- Addiction
- Inappropriate content
- Grooming

Has anyone ever experienced one of these online and would they be willing to share?

- Discovering an “anonymous” account with the purpose of bullying or harassing or posting questionable content towards your school or an organization.
  - Example: An anonymous Instagram account for their high school that posts pictures of students they think should start dating.
  - Example: A parody / humor account that makes fun of students at a school.
  - How do you handle this?
- Does anyone have random people (of the opposite sex) contact them via DM and say something like “What do you look like?” or “Send me a picture?” How do you handle that?
- How do you handle friend requests / message requests from people you don't know?
  - Look at mutual friends.
  - I ask myself - would I be comfortable enough to go have lunch with this person?
  - I ask myself - am I close enough to this person to have their phone number?
  - Shared that, when you are in a new setting, such as maybe attending a new school or joining a new organization, connecting via social media may be one of your most useful tools for meeting new people. Make sure to use discernment in who you accept or who you request. You may want to send a message along with your request that says something like “I'm the new student in class, we met today.”
- Have you ever felt worse after being online? Why? How did you handle it?
  - FOMO
  - Realizing your friends may have differences of opinions than you.
- Talk with your parents or a trusted adult about any red flags you might get on social media.
  - Sudden strange friend or message requests from strangers
  - Someone asking for pictures
  - Someone asking for your personal information like an address or phone number
  - Someone being bullied online.
  - Someone posting content that threatens another person or location

## **Biblical Perspective on Discernment (10 min)**

**Key verse:** Proverbs 4:23-27 – “Guard your heart.”

- How does social media influence our hearts and minds?
  - Did you know that your feed is specifically curated by an algorithm that detects what you like and don't like and what you spend time on?
    - Everyone's social media feed looks different. (Example, I love cows so my entire feed is pictures of cows. If you like crafts, your entire feed might be crafts. If you like cooking, you might see a lot of recipes.)
    - The more you like, love, or comment on something, the more of that type of content you will see.
    - If you unfollow or block something, you will see less of that type content.
    - Social media can pull data from the types of things you are googling on search engines.
    - Social media can even “listen” to your conversations if your phone is nearby.
  - What you engage with can determine your feed!
- Recognizing truth vs. lies online (Philippians 4:8).
  - Have you ever seen something online or on social media that you question whether it's true or not?
  - With AI (artificial intelligence) now, there are so many pieces of content and information that are 100% solely AI generated. How do you know the difference? How do you use discernment in what is true or what is a lie?
  - Pray about your social media presence. Pray for guidance to recognize these things.

## **Common Traps & How to Avoid Them (5 min)**

- **Comparison & Envy:** The highlight reel effect vs. reality.
- **Cyberbullying & Gossip:** Ephesians 4:29 – Speaking with kindness.
- **Addiction & Time Management:** Setting boundaries with social media.
  - The average teen spends 4.8 hours a day on social media.
- Digital detox strategies: Time limits, notification control, screen-free time.
- Who do you follow? Cleaning up your feed with a faith-focused mindset.
- Are there some people on your social media feed that you need to unfollow?
  - Example of unfollowing people anytime I see content that makes me upset / makes me feel anxious, etc.
  - How would your news feed look different if you unfollowed one person who is negative and replaced that with a person who is positive.
- How to respond to negativity online
  - Using the Biblical approach to resolving conflicts.
  - Ignoring vs. responding in love

- When at all possible, respond to disagreements in person, over the phone so you can hear the tone of voice, etc. If at all possible use any method possible to avoid getting into conflicts online that occur over texts messages or Facebook comments.

## Part 3: Using Social Media for Good

**Objective:** Encourage students to use social media to glorify God and uplift others.

- I want you to take a moment and think of someone who inspires you on social media.
  - Why do they inspire you?
  - How do you feel when you read or see their content?
  - Some examples they may say are Sadie Robertson, Toby Mac, etc.
  - How do you feel when you see their content and why do you like it? (Examples they may say are, it makes me see that being a Christian is a “cool” thing. It shows me an example of what I want to be like when I get older.)
- Remind the teens (especially the older ones) that most likely to someone else at this church, or in their school, or town, they are the person someone else looks up to on social media. And make sure that your posts are reflecting a positive light. Because someone is always looking up to you.

### Biblical Perspective on Influence

- **Key verses:** Colossians 3:17 – “Whatever you do... do it all in the name of the Lord.”
  - Social media as a tool for spreading positivity and truth.
  - The power of words: Encouraging vs. discouraging content (Proverbs 18:21).

### Ways to Shine for Christ Online (Brainstorm some ways to do this)

- Posting scripture, uplifting messages, or testimonies.
- Encouraging others with comments, DMs, and shares.
- Sharing content from our church, community service, etc.
- Avoiding online arguments and responding with grace (James 1:19).

Challenge: For those on social media, can you create one post this week that will let your light shine?

## Part 4: Wrap UP - The Top Misconceptions About Social Media

(This can be like an interactive discussion – true or false - get the students to give their opinions)

1. True or false - Snapchats disappear.
  - a. Talk about how people can screenshot. How people can replay the phone while someone else is recording it from another device, etc. Never put something on Snapchat you would not feel comfortable with your parents or teacher seeing.

2. True or False - Screenshots can be deleted and they go away.
  - a. Talk about how even things that are “deleted” can be digitally retrieved and stick around for years and years. Again, don’t put anything in a group text or send it out that you don’t feel comfortable with others seeing.
3. True or False - Sharing your location is safe.
  - a. Talk about good practices of who to share your location with (parents), Life360, etc. and who NOT to share your location with.
  - b. Talk about location sharing in your posts, for example, don’t post a selfie saying you’re at a specific location if it’s not safe.
4. True or False - Every profile is a real person.
  - a. False. Talk about how people can create fake profiles, fake accounts, for the purposes of grooming, getting personal information, unsafe actions, etc. Just because a profile picture looks like someone your age, or even someone you know, it may not be real. Never give our personal information, personal data, etc.
5. True or False - Once you delete a post it’s gone.
  - a. Talk about again how things can be digitally retrieved for a long time afterwards.
6. True or False - Anonymous profiles can never be tracked back to someone.
  - a. False. Talk about how everything can be tracked to an IP address, even anonymous profiles and anonymous emails.
  - b. If an anonymous / hurtful profile arises say at your school or within your circle, don’t engage and report it to a trusted adult.
7. True or False - You can make money off social media.
  - a. Talk about how there is a temptation to think you can be an “influencer” but in general, it is not something you can make a career out of it. And remember, your #s or followers are not the way you are measured for succes on social media.

## **Hand out Social Media for Teens Handout**

### **Closing Reflection & Prayer (2 min)**

- Thankful for these wonderful young people and their courage to shine their light on social media for Christ.
- Prayer for boldness in sharing faith online.
- Encouragement to be intentional in how they use social media.