



Session 3

Lesson 5: Understanding Today's Youth Culture



Quote

- “More.”

-- A one-word description of today's youth culture



Key Terms

- Self-centered
- Discipline & Independence
- Stress
- Violence
- Divorce & Family
- Boundaries
- Choices & Consumerism



Lecture Objectives

- Describe in general terms the culture of youth today
- Identify implications of that description for our ministry among youth



To Think About Before You Go On

- What would you identify in the youth culture or youth attitudes today that were true of you and your friends when you were in high school? What would you identify as different? Are there any positive changes? Negative changes? How do these observations impact your approach to ministry among youth?



Understanding Today's Youth Culture - (Our Target)

How Kids Are the Same

One of the best books ever written on youth ministry is _____.

If you want to understand how the youth of today think, take a minute to reflect back on your own life. What were you like when you were a teenager? How did you relate to your parents? Were you rebellious? What stupid things did you do? How did you feel about trying to fit in? What was your favorite band? Who did you have a crush on?

Taking a trip down memory lane will remind you of the way teenagers, throughout most of history, tend to think and act. This does not mean that each generations is void of its own unique characteristics and problems, but it does mean that there are many traits that are universally familiar. The following is a list of some of the ways kids are the same:

- Self-centered
- Consumed with acceptance
- Insecure
- Strong appetite for life (and pizza)
- Lazy
- Seeking independence
- Arrogant
- Ignorant
- Lack discipline
- Test boundaries
- Questions tradition
- Materialistic
- Jealous

What would you add to this list?

Who Were You?

Favorite:

Food _____

Musician: _____

Movie: _____

Actor/Actress: _____

Class: _____

Best Friends Names:

Greatest Joy: _____

Greatest Fear: _____

4 Words that described you in High School:

How well did you relate to your parents?

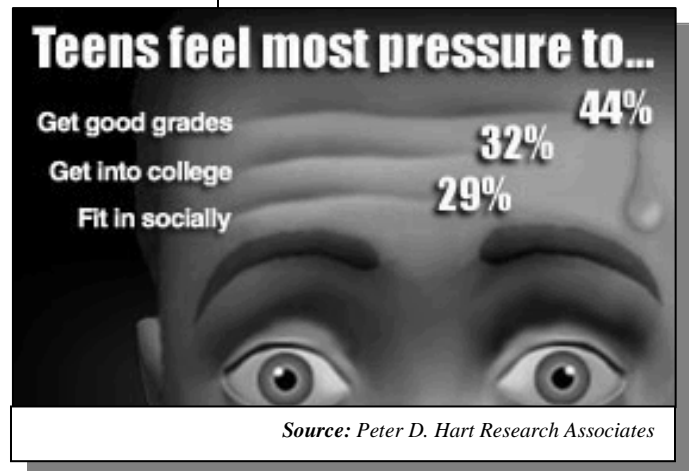
How Kids Are Different

Though kids are the same in many ways, there are, no doubt, major differences between the world they live in and the world in which we grew up. Many of these differences have had a profound impact on the way kids think and act. The following is a list of issues that commonly face the youth of today:

Greater Stress

When asked what their number one problem is, many students will respond by saying they are stressed. What is it that causes students of this generation to be more stressed than any other generation?

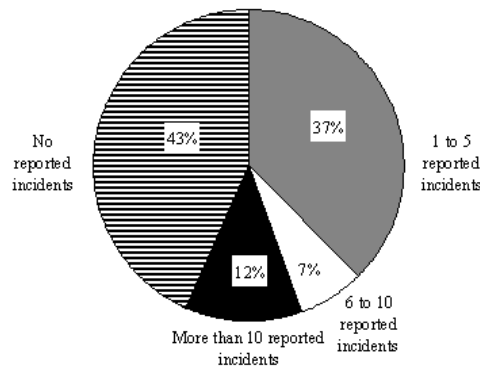
- Expectations
- Acceptance
- Success
- Relationships
- Academics
- Home Life
- Abuse
- Sports
- Choices
- Music and Media
- Information
- Alcohol/Drugs
- Sleep Deprivation



Greater Violence

- Weapons at School
- Violent Fights
- Sexual Violence
- Violence in Media
- Senseless Violence
- Violence for Fun
- Violence on Self
- Violence at Home

Figure 3.—Percent of public schools with number of reported crime incidents at the school: 1996-97



NOTE: The number of reported incidents of crime at the school are based on the total number of the following crimes for which the school reported that the police were contacted: murder, rape or other sexual battery, suicide, physical attack or fight with and without a weapon, robbery, theft or larceny, and vandalism. Percents may not add to 100 because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Principal/School Disciplinary Survey on School Violence," FRSS 63, 1997.

Unstable Family Life

- More Divorce
- Uninvolved Parents
- No Tradition
- No Training
- No Boundaries



Electronic and Information Revolution

- Computers
- Video Games
- Music, Movies, and Media

Peer Groups

Peer groups have become the most important influence in teenagers' lives. They are more likely to listen to the "wisdom" of their friends than to any other source. Where do they get their insight? From the peer groups they associate with on TV.

Choices

- More Flavors
- More Channels
- More Schools
- More Religions
- More Opportunities
- More Good Things
- More of Everything...

New Trends

- Sex – No Rules
- Substance Abuse
- Materialism
- Depression
- Relativism
- Spirituality

According to the US Center for Disease Control:

34% of the nation's 9th graders have had sex.
48% of the nation's 10th graders have had sex.
By 11th grade, 59% and by 12th grade 67% have had sex.

One study showed that only 6.9% of men and 21% of women aged 18-69 had their first intercourse on their wedding night.



Join the discussion:

- Visit iCourse (<http://www.portal.covenantseminary.edu>) and let us know: Are you "on target"? How does this description of today's youth culture (culture at large?) impact you and your ministry role among your friends? Neighbors? Youth?

Resources to stay in touch with youth culture:

- Rolling Stone Magazine
- Center for Parent/Youth Understanding-CPYU.org
- Teen People
- Entertainment Weekly
- Focus on the Family
- Plugged In
- Youthspecialties.com
- Newsweek
- Group Magazine

- Billboard Magazine
- Your High School Yearbook
- Your local record store
- MTV
- VH1
- The WB
- Hollywood.com
- Time Magazine
- Your local shopping mall-people watching



- Go back and rethink the 'To think about before you go on' questions on the first page of this lecture.