

Objectives for Session

<15: Basic introduction to the internet, how to navigate a righteous path through MSN, My Space, Bebo, Facebook etc, as well as some simple, age-appropriate teaching on the dangers of pornography, what the Bible has to say about it and how to stay safe.

Introduction

Go around the group and find out what the young people know about the Social Networking sites.

- How many use any of the above?
- What are the differences between the above?
- What other things do they use the internet for?
- Why do they think James has included this in the Sex Factor series?

The following is a sort description of some of the sites and how they describe themselves:

What is Facebook?

Facebook is a social utility that connects people with friends and others who work, study and live around them. People use Facebook to keep up with friends, upload an unlimited number of photos, share links and videos, and learn more about the people they meet.

What is Bebo?

Bebo is the next generation social networking service where members can stay in touch with their College friends, connect with friends, share photos, discover new interests and just hang out.

What is MSN Messenger?

MSN Messenger is a freeware instant messaging client that was developed and

distributed by Microsoft

What is MySpace?

MySpace is an online community that lets you meet your friends' friends.

What is YouTube?

Founded in February 2005, YouTube is the leader in online video, and the premier destination to watch and share original videos worldwide through a Web experience. YouTube allows people to easily upload and share video clips on www.YouTube.com and across the Internet through websites, mobile devices, blogs, and email.

Everyone can watch videos on YouTube.

Sites are intended for 13+ age group.

Information breeds intimacy.

Married couples know things about each other that nobody else or very few other people do. This information places them in a position of intimacy. Parents know all sorts of private information about their children that very few people do. This is appropriate intimacy. By allowing people to access information about ourselves via Facebook etc, we open the door to inappropriate intimacy by people who do not know us and should not have access to very personal facts about our lives.

-All of the social networking sites are built around the idea of 'networking'. This can be extremely dangerous as we can allow strangers or mutual/vague acquaintances access to extremely personal information about us that we would never divulge in a normal 'social' setting (e.g. a party); the web is, by nature, disarming.

Dangers

Go around the group and highlight some of the dangers of these internet resources:

- Revealing too much information
- Being vulnerable to strangers
- Miscommunication – people misunderstand what others are saying and take offense.
- Wasting time
- Inappropriate behaviour (e.g. gossip, slagging people off)
- Access to inappropriate content

- Once uploaded, you lose any control over pictures or videos. This puts you in a potentially difficult position.
- People can make opinions of you from what they read (e.g. people have lost jobs etc).
- People knowing where you are going to be etc could put you in a vulnerable position.
- According to the Guidelines of Youtube and Facebook and MySpace, these sites are not intended for under 13s.

Word

What does the bible say about this subject?

Main Passage

1 Corinthians 6:9 - 20

You may say "I am allowed to do anything." But I reply, "Not everything is good for you." And even though "I am allowed to do anything," I must not become a slave to anything. V12 (NLT)

In this passage, Paul is encouraging the Corinthian church to avoid sexual sin. The Corinthian church had somehow acquired the catchphrase, "I am allowed to do anything". They have freedom in Christ, but have misunderstood this freedom and have ignored the importance of obeying Christ and have been using this freedom as an excuse to commit sin. Paul warns them that just because they are allowed to do something does not mean it is good for them.

Paul also warns of the dangers of becoming enslaved to things. Sin can be very addictive if we are not ruthless. Sexual sin and inappropriate things we may do on our computers can be especially dangerous; because it can be quite secretive and can be hidden.

There is nothing inherently wrong with the internet or using websites like Facebook or YouTube, but we cannot allow them to take control of our lives.

Key Points

- Just because the bible does not explicitly state that something is wrong does not mean it is good for us.
- There is a time and a place for the internet, but it should not control us.

Pornography

Pornography is sexually explicit pictures or videos designed to arouse. Pornography is primarily aimed at men and is a multi-billion pound industry that exploits women and ensnares millions of men and boys around the world.

Pornography is focused on pleasing yourself, and is a very selfish and totally ungodly area. Pornography is a sin.

Because so many people are willing to pay money to look at images and videos etc, there is a huge amount of material available via the internet. Boys are naturally attracted to naked women and can therefore be easily sucked into pornography, through natural curiosity and peer pressure. We need to be aware of the potential danger and direct our energy into Godly activities and attitudes.

The bible is very clear that we should not allow this kind of stuff in our lives.

2 verses

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Phil 4:8

But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Matt 5:28

On a practical note, there are websites that try and install applications onto your PC that link to inappropriate websites. To avoid this type of website, install a popup blockers, virus checker and spyware scanners and be careful about the type of websites that you visit. Trying to download illegally pirated music, software or films can put you at risk of downloading viruses, Trojans, spyware or other unwanted applications.

Key points:

- Make use of software designed to protect you e.g. antivirus software, firewalls, popup blockers etc
- Keep away from websites that promote illegal file sharing.
- It should be our aim to keep our minds pure.

More Safety Tips

The sites listed above have sections on how to safely use their websites:

1. YouTube Safety Tips (<http://youtube.com/t/safety>)
2. Facebook Safety (<http://www.facebook.com/help.php?safety>)

3. Bebo (<http://www.bebo.com/Safety.jsp>)
4. My Space safety Tips
(http://www.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=cms.viewpage&placement=safety_pagehome)