

“Why Can’t You Put Down that Phone?”

Discussion Booklet for Teens

Facilitator’s Guide Book

<https://youtu.be/Thkl8-q2pYc>



<https://www.cathmed.org/media/> - public service videos

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Group Facilitator's Guide

Tips to help you plan

- A group facilitator does not have to be an expert in neurophysiology or psychology. Rather, a facilitator makes others feel welcome and is able to draw out those who need a little extra encouragement; and reins in the more exuberant participants.
- Familiarize yourself with the video, questions, exercises and suggested resources before your meeting. Spend time considering how people may respond to them. This will help you to be prepared for some directions the discussion might take.
- Schedule a 60-minute discussion session for your particular group as far in advance as possible and publicize it to your target audience. Because there is more material in the booklet than can be covered in an hour, you might select questions you want your group to focus on during the hour. Let participants know that also listed in the booklet are helpful tips and suggestions are that they can consider on their own.
- Some groups might want to meet two or three times.
 - During the first session, participants can focus on questions of interest.
 - For the second session, invite participants to share some tips or recommendations that they implemented.
 - If a third discussion session is desired, focus on particular areas of interest and encourage ongoing implementation of tips, recommendations or other helpful ideas that emerged during the group discussion.
- Arrange for an appropriate meeting space and for A/V equipment to play the video "Why can't you put down that phone?"
- Once you know how many people will be attending the discussion, make copies of the discussion booklet.
- Consider a hospitality table with simple refreshments, which may help to break the ice and foster discussion within the group.
- Arrive early to the session to set up the registration table and hospitality area; arrange the gathering space for the video presentation and discussion.
- Consider praying for God's blessing upon all those who will participate in your discussions.
- Consider choosing a prayer to begin each discussion session.
- The most important preparation for you as a facilitator is to go through the questions yourself. Your personal participation in the study will help you relate to and understand the experiences of your group members.

- Remember, it is not the facilitator's job to answer every question that comes up. Whenever possible, ask the participant what he or she thinks first. If appropriate, engage the others present for their thoughts.
- Stay on time and on topic. Some persons find it helpful to have a second person in the group who is responsible for giving a ten minute "warning" signal to allow ample time to finish the discussion and perhaps close with a prayer. Finishing the discussion period promptly is essential and shows respect for the participants.
- The group will expect you to keep the discussion moving.
 - Watch for clues that a timid person has something to say and encourage that person without putting him or her on the spot.
 - Kindly "rein in" participants who dominate the group. If they continue, ask them privately to help you get others to participate.
 - Gently redirect tangential remarks or questions.
- Don't share confidences outside the group.
- Enjoy yourself!

How to structure each discussion session

Here is a simple agenda:

- Introduction (5–10 minutes) for gathering and opening remarks
- View video "Why Can't You Put Down that Phone?" (5 ½ minutes)
- Group discussion (30 minutes) engaging participants using the booklet with its discussion questions, tips and suggestions and resources
- Closing remarks and possible prayer (5–10 minutes)

Section 1

Video Review

1. Did you hear anything that surprised you in the video?
 2. How does *operant conditioning* or *cueing* make you want to check your cell phone? (Hint: Think of the seal in the video).
 3. How can screen overuse alter the teen developing brain? What neurochemical is especially involved in this alteration?
 4. Persons who excessively engage in *World of Warcraft* or *Minecraft* for example, can have trouble stopping. Describe how this happens.
 5. What is your response to hearing that: Steve Jobs, founder of the iPhone, never permitted his kids to use an iPhone; and that Evan Williams, founder of Blogger, Twitter and Medium, refused to give his two young sons an iPad and instead bought them hundreds of books?*
- (*<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/11/fashion/steve-jobs-apple-was-a-low-tech-parent.html>)

Group Discussion Questions

The following questions are intended to help you reflect on your use of screen media.

1. In what ways do social media platforms and texting benefit you, your family, and friends?
2. What is your reaction when you pick up your phone to see if you have any messages or “likes” and there aren’t any? How does this make you feel?
3. Do you catch yourself accessing social media when you should be doing something else?
4. How much time do you spend with friends online as compared with friends in real life?
5. In what situations do you interrupt a conversation you are having with someone face-to-face to check a message you received?
6. Do you multi-task when using your screens? What do you choose to do when multi-tasking?
7. Have you ever experienced FOMO? In what situations?
8. How much free time do you daily spend on your electronic device(s)?
9. Are there triggers for when you use your electronic device? When bored? When alone? When you first awake? Others?
10. How does electronic media affect your mood?
11. When you use your electronic device, how often do you have a clear purpose in mind?
12. How often have you gotten less sleep at night because you used your phone in bed?
13. In what situations do you think it is inappropriate to engage in social media?
14. How many of your posts help to build people up?
15. What would concern you if you were asked to turn off your devices for 24 hours?
16. What skills or talents could you develop if you were spending an hour less on social media each day?

Section 2

Be a Smarter Screen User

We know the tricks that advertisers use to tempt us—a mouthwatering sundae or a shiny red car. Tech design engineers also know how to get our attention. The color red in notifications on our cell phones and tablets trigger a desire to see what it is all about. Auto-play in videos can get us hooked to watching much longer than we intended. More and more cell phone and tablet functions are designed to get us to spend more time using these devices.

Here are a few suggestions to help you be more aware of your tech usage:

Say no to notifications. A notification is intended to let you know something important needs attention. Most notifications are machine automated and do not involve people. They are intended to get you to engage with an app you might not have otherwise thought about. Set notifications for things that are important to you.

Put your phone on “do not disturb” mode and allow only calls from “favorites”. You might be surprised how much time interruptions from messages take away from what is important to you.

No screen zones. Use good screen etiquette. No screens at meal time will help facilitate better face-to-face conversations. Also keep your phone and tablet out of your bedroom at night. You will probably get more minutes of sleep and better quality sleep. Of course, you should not read or send messages while driving.

Use an old fashioned alarm clock. Not using your phone or tablet as an alarm clock will prevent you from being tempted to engage in the many other functions your phone and tablet offers you at a time and place designated for rest and sleep.

Utilize Apps to Help Increase Screen-free Time

Many apps are available to help persons be more mindful of their use of screens and to allow for more screen-free time.

Consider Internet firewalls and filtering systems for cell phones, tablets, and computers. There are many on the market. Some suggestions for parents include:

- *Circle Go*
- *Qustodio*
- *Covenant Eyes*

Challenge yourself to reduce screen time.

Initially, try to reduce your screen time by one hour per week.

You could also challenge yourself to a no-screen day. Giving up screens for a day is not intended to be a punishment. It is an opportunity for you to challenge yourself to interact with people in new ways.

- Get your friends on board.
- Choose a day that is realistic to be screen-free.
- Take some time to reflect on your screen-free day.
 - What did you notice?
 - How did your no-screen day compare with a day when using screens?
 - What do you notice when you were interacting face-to-face with others for a day?
 - What were you able to do because you were not engaged with your screens?

Based upon your experience with a no-screen day, consider finding an entire weekend to go screen-free.

Need help?

If you know someone who is struggling with screen overuse, encourage him or her to speak with his or her parents, a youth minister or school counselor, for example.

Resources

Below are suggested resources. No endorsement of all material contained therein is intended. These can be recommended for parents and some can be considered for review with teens.

Websites/Blogs/Podcasts

www.common sense media.org

www.screenfree.org

www.internetlivestats.com

www.pewinternet.org

TED Talks on Screen Use:

- “Why Screens Make Us Less Happy,” Adam Alter
(www.ted.com/talks/adam_alter_why_our_screens_make_us_less_happy)
- “What You Are Missing While Being a Digital Zombie,” Patrik Wincent (youtu.be/TAIxb42FjwE)
- “Why We Should Rethink Our Relationship with the Smartphone,” Lior Frenkel
(youtu.be/Pgo65s1R6TM)
- “How Social Media Makes Us Unsocial,” Allison Graham (youtu.be/d5GecYjy9-Q)

The Art of Manliness Podcasts (www.artofmanliness.com/podcast)

Ascension Press (ascensionpress.com)

Steubenville Mid-America Conference presents Paul J. Kim on elevating social media
(steubystl365.com/paul-kim-elebate-social-media/)

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She offers workshops on a variety of topics including human attachment, boundaries and character development, depression and anxiety, dialogue and conflict resolution, as well as on social media and its effects on the brain for clergy, seminarians, women's and men's religious communities, parents, teachers and students. She is a formator within her own religious community. She presents on Internet pornography addiction—a Catholic approach to treatment to bishops, clergy, seminarians, religious communities, and laity throughout the United States and Europe She presented to the U.S. Bishops in Dallas TX in 1992 on "Pedophilia and Other Addictions". She was a member of the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse in 1994-1995. Sister Marysia has presented to the Curia, Vatican City State on "Sexual Abuse of Minors by Clergy in North America" in 2002. She has served as a psychological expert consultant for the Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, USCCB. Her publications include: "Medical Aspects of Addiction"; "The Roman Catholic Church and the Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests and Religious in the United States and Canada: What Have We Learned? Where Are We Going?"; "Pornography, Electronic Media and Priestly Formation"; Her publications in *Seminary Journal* include: "Significant Markers of Human Maturation Applied to the Selection and Formation of Seminarians"; "The Discernment of a Priestly Vocation and the Expertise of Psychiatry and Psychology"; and "Internet Pornography and Priestly Formation: Medium and Content Collide With the Human Brain". Her book, "The Art of Accompaniment: Practical Steps for the Seminary Formator" is available on amazon.com. Her book, "Why Can't You Put Down that Phone" is pending publication as is her chapter "Guideposts for the Seminary Formator in Understanding and Assessing Levels of Preoccupation with Use of Internet Pornography and a Formative Process for Moving from Vice to Virtue" in *Spiritual Husband-Spiritual Fathers: Priestly Formation for the 21st Century*. She also has a short video on "Screen Addiction" located at www.cathmed.org/videos.