

Hot Topics

LEADER GUIDE

netiquette

Note to Leaders: *Your girls have grown up in a world where technology is a primary means of communication. Be aware of what they're saying on their Twitter, Facebook, and MySpace pages. Don't be afraid to let them know you're paying attention. Make comments on their pages and make mention of things you've seen when you meet in person. Sometimes it can be helpful for girls to realize that anyone can see the things they post. Often girls use their pages as a means to cry for help and it's important to let your girls know you're available to listen.*

Isn't technology great? With the ease of composing an email, we have the opportunity to communicate with thousands of people at a time. We can stay in touch with friends across long distances over Twitter, Facebook, or MySpace. Technology allows us to spread information rapidly and efficiently. Everything is quick and simple – most of the time.

However, there are real possibilities for disaster associated with this quick and easy form of communication. One misplaced keystroke or word omitted could have potentially devastating results. To quote Peter Parker (aka Spider-man), "With great power comes great responsibility."

Have you ever been hurt by something someone has posted about you? Have you ever accidentally upset someone by something you posted? How did it feel?

Be sure to steer the conversation away from mentioning names or specific details.

Use these Scripture verses to discuss the importance of being a conscientious user of technology.

Read Ephesians 4:29

What is "unwholesome talk"?
Does everything you post benefit others?

Read 1 Timothy 4:12

What does it mean to set an example in the way you speak?
How could you set an example in these areas?

Read Proverbs 11:13, 16:28, 18:8, 20:19, 26:20, and 26:22

What do these verses have in common?
Have you ever been gossiped about? How did it feel?
Do you think technology makes it easier to gossip?
How can you avoid using technology to gossip?

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Guidelines for Netiquette

- 1. Don't type anything you wouldn't say.** Sometimes anonymity in the cyberworld allows us to feel bolder (or ruder) than we would be in person. In actuality, things we write or type can last much longer than things we say. If you (or better yet – Jesus) wouldn't say it, then don't type or text it.
- 2. Proofread.** Read through comments, emails, blogs, etc., not only to check for typos, but also to ensure you're saying exactly what you mean and you're communicating clearly. Keep in mind that the things you type don't carry the same voice inflection or body language that you are able to use to communicate normally.
- 3. Don't respond while you're angry.** If you receive a message that upsets you, log off the computer, go outside, take a walk, read a book, take a moment to pray, and then come back and respond. Once you respond out of anger, you can't take it back.
- 4. Log off.** Technology makes everything simpler, but it will never be as personal as sending an encouraging note through the snail mail, meeting someone face-to-face, or even picking up the phone and talking. Take time to step away from the computer and have an actual conversation with another human being.
- 5. Facebook ≠ Journal.** Your posts shouldn't be your personal journal. What you post can be read by just about anyone. Notes and status updates are a great place to share thoughts and feelings, which can be very encouraging for others going through similar circumstances, but don't post anything you wouldn't be comfortable sharing in normal conversation. There is such a thing as being too transparent.

netiquette Leader Guide

continued

Read James 3:1–12

Why is it so important to guard our speech?

Is what we say any different than what we post? Why or why not?

What do your posts and the way you communicate say about you as a person? What do they say about you as a representative of Jesus?

Additional Questions

Sometimes miscommunications happen when you're simply having a friendly conversation and you say something that was intended one way, but your friend took it another way. What are some ways to avoid misunderstandings with your friends when you're IMing or texting?

If you ever feel threatened or bullied on Facebook or through texting, what should you do?

How can you better reflect Jesus in the way you use technology?



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