Marriage • Parenting • Spiritual Growth • Sexuality • Relationships • Mental Health
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a resource in:
Sunday School

Technology Lessons
Middle School

Lesson 1 – Purity

Recommended Age/Class: **Middle School** (6th-8th grade)

Teaching Principle: Technology in today's society has the potential to lead to and encourage impurity within our lives.

Lesson Objectives:

1. The student will understand technology can lead to and encourage us into impure activities.

2. The student will understand the Scriptures is what we should use to determine right from wrong.

3. The student will understand we should always be watchful and seek to avoid inappropriate and sinful content on the internet.

4. The student will understand internet filters and monitors are helpful tools, but staying accountable to parents is also necessary.

Scripture:

Psalm 101:3, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes…"

Proverbs 22:3, "A prudent man forseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on and are punished."

2 Timothy 2:22, "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

Content:

- Everything we do, view, or hear should be done in the way we believe Christ would do it.
- The Scriptures provide us a standard for measuring if some action is how Christ would do it.
- Instead of asking ourselves if we will enjoy watching a movie, listening to a song, looking at images on a website, etc., we should ask ourselves if God would want us to do so.
- Having access to more devices 24/7 provides many opportunities to access impure content or use technology for wrong motives and actions.
- Internet filters and monitors can be useful tools that help guard us against sinful content, but they are not foolproof.
- If we encounter sinful content, we should find a way to immediately stop viewing or hearing it. Having a plan in our mind of what to do if this occurs will enable us to turn away from the evil.
- Being accountable to parents and/or another adult in how we use technology can help us stay pure.

Technology

Discussion Questions:

1. According to these two verses, how does God look upon purity and impurity?
   a. *Matthew 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."*
   b. *Habakkuk 1:13, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?"*

2. List positive uses of technology. Consider internet, texting, cell phones, TV/movies, etc.

3. Read *Psalm 101:3*. Identify possible examples of "*wicked things*" in the following:
   a. Internet/Facebook:
   b. Texting/Twitter:
   c. Video games:
   d. TV/movies:

4. Consider this situation:

   You are with a group of friends and one of them has an inappropriate picture on his/her iPhone They want to Instagram the picture and tag all of you in the photo. Your stomach instantly gets a funny, uneasy feeling. When you say "I don't really think that's a good idea", your friends all reply "it's okay, our parents won't see it. It will be funny." What do you do?

Activity:

1. Acrostic Poem Reflection: Have students create an acrostic poem such as the one below for lessons they learned from today or actions they will take to safeguard themselves to stay pure when using technology. Other possible words to use for an acrostic about today's lesson include: PURE, SAFE, or TECH.
   Avoid danger
   Cease activity when warning flags emerge
   Tell an adult when see or hear something impure

2. Object Lesson: (Materials needed: three sealed water bottles, small container with dirt, funnel, spoon)
   a. Ask if anyone is thirsty and would they like a drink. Have them drink some from one bottle or drink some yourself. Discuss what it tastes like – pure water.
      i. Compare this good water to a soul that is pure. Nothing is in the water to contaminate it, just like a pure soul has nothing evil or sinful within to contaminate it.
   b. Remove the lid from another bottle of water and add several spoonfuls of dirt, using funnel if necessary. Ask anyone if they would like to drink from this water bottle.
      i. Compare this water to those websites we know to be bad or content we know before viewing it that it will be sinful. We know to avoid this type of impurity.
   c. Remove the lid from the last bottle and add just a pinch of dirt to the bottle, so that it does not become obvious. Ask anyone if they would like to drink this water.
      i. Compare this water to opportunities using technology in which it is not immediately obvious that we have ventured into some sinful. Discuss how we must be watchful and alert, and rely upon the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit to warn us of danger.

Lesson 2 – Communication

Recommended Age/Class: **Middle School** (6th-8th grade)

Teaching Principle: Due to the ease, immediacy, and perceived anonymity of social media, technology in today's society has the potential to encourage communication that is not God-honoring.

Lesson Objectives:

1. The student will understand technology can make it easy to communicate in ways that do not honor God.

2. The student will understand the Scriptures show us how we should communicate with others, whether it is face-to-face or with the use of technology.

3. The student will understand technology can encourage us to react quickly without thinking, which is not the way Christ would respond.

4. The student will understand the lack of face-to-face contact with technology can lead to less meaningful interaction with others.

Scripture:

Ephesians 4:29, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying."

James 3:5-10, "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of inequity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be."

Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Content:

- All communication we have with others should honor Christ and encourage others, no matter if it is face-to-face or with any technological device.
- The Scriptures show us how to communicate in ways that are Christ-like and encouraging to others.
- We should ask ourselves before we send any message, image, etc. to an individual, group of people, or post publicly whether it is something Christ would share or say.
- When we are tempted to respond in a quick and angry manner, we should wait until our anger has gone away and we can respond calmly and kindly.
- If we have communicated in a way that is not how Christ would want us to talk with others, we should apologize and ask for forgiveness from God and the people/persons we offended.

Technology

Discussion Questions:

1. Read *Ephesians 4:29*. Identify some examples of the following phrases:
   a. Communication "*to the use of edifying* [encouraging someone]":
   b. "*corrupt* [not God-honoring] *communication*":

2. How does social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snap Chat, etc.) and the internet increase the possibility to have "*corrupt communication*"?

3. Abraham Lincoln would always wait a day before he would reply to a negative letter someone had sent him. Why would it be wise to wait before responding to someone? Explain why this is difficult with the social media of today.

4. How can a sense of secrecy affect your communication on the internet?

5. Using *Philippians 4:8* as your model, create a checklist to think through if your spoken and online communication is God-honoring.

Activity:

1. Scenario Application Activity: For the following scenarios below, have students apply the THINK checklist to determine if it was appropriate and if not, better choices for communication that could have been made:
   Before you speak, ask yourself:
   - T: Is it true?
   - H: Is it honest?
   - I: Is it inspiring?
   - N: Is it necessary?
   - K: Is it kind?

   Scenario A: A classmate from school posts a meme on your Facebook page that is a slightly offensive joke about people who are of a different skin color than you. You don't like this joke, but you have been trying to become friends with this classmate, so you could fit into the "cool" crowd at school. You decide to leave this joke on your Facebook page, hoping you can be accepted into this group of friends.

   Scenario B: Sam sees several people are posting photos on Instagram or Snap Chat of a new student in the middle school who is smart, but a little "geeky." The posts are done in a bullying manner. When someone asks Sam what he thinks of these posts, he tells them they are not cool and wishes they would stop. He decides to take a picture of him with this new student during their robotics club meeting and post it on Instagram.

   Scenario C: Someone tweets a Bible verse that means a lot to them that day, an hour later tweets about a new video game they just played that involves a war game, a few hours later tweets a phrase from a Christian song they heard on the radio, and the next day tweets about a good-looking girl they saw on the street. [Talk about the reflection of Christ and the inconsistency this scenario shows.]

2. Object Lesson: (Materials needed: toothpaste, spoon, paper plate)
   a. Ask a student to squeeze toothpaste onto the paper plate. Tell him or her to squeeze out as much as he/she wants.
   b. Ask this student to try and put it back in with a spoon. Perhaps even ask several students.
   c. Discuss how it is impossible to take our words back, just as it is impossible to put toothpaste back in the tube once it is squeezed out. Even if a social media post is deleted, the person still remembers it and consequences in our relationship with that person or others remain.

Lesson 3 – Reality & Deception

Recommended Age/Class: **Middle School** (6th-8th grade)

Teaching Principle: Technology in today's society has the potential to lead to deception from a lost view of reality and from inaccurate sources of information.

Lesson Objectives:

1. The student will understand technology has the potential to deceive us through inaccurate sources of information that lead us away from a view of reality.

2. The student will understand the Scriptures should be used to measure the values, beliefs, and purposes of the author(s) of information found on the internet.

3. The student will understand experienced believers can provide wisdom and advice in determining if something is true or trustworthy.

Scripture:

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil."

Proverbs 24:6, "For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety."

Content:

- Technology gives us access to many sources of information, of which some are good, neutral, or evil.
- Information found with technology may only reflect one perspective or few viewpoints.
- Many people believe information found online and do not take the time to determine if it is accurate.
- We should use the Scriptures and rely on the Holy Spirit to help us determine if the information is true.
- When determining whether the information is true, we should decide if the values, beliefs, and purposes of the author(s) aligns with the Bible.
- Experienced believers can provide good advice in deciding whether information or ideas of beliefs align with the Scriptures.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some dangers of believing everything we read online?

2. How do we "*prove all things* [determine good or evil]" (*1 Thess. 5:21-22*)? What is our standard according to these verses?

3. Explain how we can determine what truth is and what truth isn't on the internet. How about from Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, chat rooms, or through texts?

4. Technology can also bring a certain sense of secrecy. How does this affect our actions/decisions? Why is it tempting to not be 100% honest when using or communicating on technology?

5. How can this sense of secrecy affect our spiritual life? How can it affect our openness with our parents and friends? What are ways to "*abstain* [avoid]" from this "*appearance of evil*" (*1 Thess. 5:22*)?

Activity:

1. Fact Checking:
    a. Ask students how they can tell if something is real or fake when they read it online. Discuss the importance of ensuring something is real before retweeting, reposting, or sharing it with others. Compare sharing something that we don't know to be true as gossip or spreading rumors.
    b. Discuss the following ideas as possible ways to check for accuracy of information:
        i. Is the source "close" geographically to the place it happened?
        ii. Is the source independent or self-interested in the topic?
        iii. Is the source informed or an expert in the topic?
        iv. Is the source named or anonymous?
        v. Are there multiple stories on this topic or just a single one?
    c. Choose a couple of stories from Snopes.com that are of possible interest to your students – one that is true and one that is false. (Tip: articles can be found on the Archive portion of the website by Ratings of Accuracy.) Use fact checking tips in b. above to review the two stories for clues that would help determine they are true or false.
        i. Possible true story: https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/point-ocean-closest-human-astronaut/
        ii. Possible false story: https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/full-gas-tank-explosion/
    d. Extend this discussion to how we can tell if something about the Bible is truth. As a group, modify the questions in b. above or add questions that could be used as a mental truth-checker when one encounters something related to the Bible or religious beliefs. In particular, discuss the importance of the Bible as the ultimate source of truth, rather than needing multiple sources to verify whether something is true.

2. Object Lesson: Fooled by a Clean Wrapper (Materials needed: Two identical hamburgers from a fast food restaurant that have wrappers or boxes, fake worms or gummy worms, plate, plastic knife)
    a. Ahead of the lesson, take one burger and carefully unwrap it. Replace the meat with the fake worms or gummy worms. Carefully rewrap the burger. For the other burger, unwrap the burger and make the wrapper or box look dirty. Rewrap this burger as well.
    b. Show the students the two burgers and ask them which one they would like to eat. Talk about how one looks more appealing than the other. Unwrap the better-looking burger (based on the cleaner wrapper) and prepare to cut some bites to share with the students. Share disgust with what is found in place of the meat. Then, unwrap the dirty looking burger and talk about how this looks better on the inside.
    c. Discuss how we cannot tell the truth by looking only on the "outside." Some people will make a message that is untruthful look good or appealing. We must instead weigh everything against the truth found in God's Word and the counsel of experienced believers.

Lesson 4 – Time Usage

Recommended Age/Class: **Middle School** (6th-8th grade)

Teaching Principle: Technology in today's society has the potential to lead to the misuse of our time and the possibility of having our time dominated by technology.

Lesson Objectives:

1. The student will understand technology can lead us into misusing or wasting our time.

2. The student will understand God cares how we spend our time and wants us to use it productively.

3. The student will understand that if we find ourselves spending too much time online, we need to replace the time spent on technology with other, more healthy activities.

Scripture:

Ephesians 5:15-16, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

I Corinthians 6:12, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."

Content:

- One of the dangers of technology is the temptation it poses in wasting our time.
- We should use self-control in all our activities that deal with technology.
- Even good activities using the internet can still become a misuse of our time, if they prevent us from living a varied, healthy lifestyle.
- Overusing technology can limit the time we have to spend on better activities that help us to learn, stay healthy or serve others.
- Frequently checking how much time we spend online is one way to help us from becoming addicted to social media, gaming, internet surfing, or other misuses of technology.
- We should replace unnecessary and time-wasting activities using technology with those that would help us to follow what God calls Christians to do in the Bible.

Technology

Discussion Questions:

1. How can technology control how we spend time or waste time? List your top 3 uses of technology.

2. Read *Ephesians 5:15-16*. What does "*redeeming the time*" [using your time wisely] look like? Why is God interested in how we spend our time?

3. How much of your time in a typical day is spent on technology? Describe what it looks like when someone spends too much time on technology.

4. What steps can be taken if you find yourself spending too much time on technology (*1 Corinthians 6:12*)?

Activity:

1. Redeeming the Time Challenge:
   a. Challenge students to list all the ways in which they use technology during a week. They can check how much time they actually have spent on such activities by reviewing their phone's battery usage data in Settings. Have them commit to replacing half of the time they spend online, on social media, gaming, etc. with more productive activities. As a class, brainstorm productive activities that would fulfill God's directives for living out His Word.
   b. Review their challenge the next week in class and discuss how it felt to replace their use of technology with other activities. Was it difficult to break these habits? How did it make them feel when completing the more productive activities? Were they more involved in the lives of others through these activities?

2. Song Discussion: "Take Time to Be Holy," Hymns of Zion # 112
   a. Discuss this song in light of today's lesson on spending too much time with technology.
   b. List the ways in which the song encourages us to use our time wisely for God.
   c. Talk about how we can replace temptations to waste time with technology by some of the activities listed in this song.

3. Object Lesson: Putting God First (Quart Glass Jar, Whole Walnuts, Rice)
   a. Put rice into the glass jar. Put the walnuts on top of the rice.
   b. Compare the rice to activities that are not spiritual (chatting to friends through Social Media, surfing the Internet, playing with friends, etc.) and the walnuts to things God would want us to do (praying, reading the Bible, praising God through singing, volunteering to help a neighbor rake their lawn, doing chores for our parents, etc.).
   c. Talk about how it is difficult to find time to do things for God when we fill our lives with things that are unspiritual first.
   d. Dump out the jar. Have a student put in the walnuts first and then fit in the rice around it.
   e. Discuss with students how putting the things of God in first allows us to have better priorities. We then have time to do other things with the free time we have left.