

CHALLENGE YOUR TEENAGERS TO SHARE THEIR FAITH

Many adult and teenage Christians view spiritual conversations as intrusive and inappropriate. They think it's none of their business to meddle in their friends' spiritual beliefs. But evangelism, or faith-sharing, is actually a desperate search-and-rescue mission. It's about reaching into other people's lives with Jesus' grace, truth, and salvation.

Help your teenagers see that a life without Jesus is like a car without an engine or a cell phone without a service provider. Kids need to know that even if their friends don't realize it, they're hungering and thirsting for Jesus. At the core of every human is a gaping hole—a hole that can be temporarily filled with material things, sports, or sin. But the only thing that can truly, fully, and permanently fill the gaping hole is a relationship with Jesus.

Evangelism isn't about standing on a street corner with a bullhorn yelling, "Repent!" It's about helping people fill their invisible, unquenchable need for God by sharing the gospel with them. A great place for teenagers to start is with their friends, sharing stories of their own experiences with Jesus. So-called "friendship evangelism" allows kids to develop relationships with peers while helping them build a relationship with their Savior. It also makes it easy to conduct discipleship and follow-up with these new young Christians.

TIPS >>>

In *Dare 2 Share: A Field Guide to Sharing Your Faith* (Focus on the Family), Greg Stier offers these evangelism insights:

- **Share your own story.** A compelling story has 1.) a "before-and-after" factor about how your life is different with Jesus, 2.) a turning point that convinced you Jesus was your only hope for eternal life, and 3.) authentic honesty about how you still struggle but are forgiven.
- **Discover your own faith-sharing style.** Four types of sharers include talkers (articulate and persuasive), stalkers (blunt and courageous), brains (intellectually stimulating and logical), and buddies (loving and relational). Maximize your

strengths but try out different styles in different situations.

- **Use the seven secret spiritual "weapons" at your disposal.** These include 1.) people's inner knowledge of God, 2.) their personal conscience, 3.) the power of the word of God, 4.) the power of the gospel, 5.) the power of prayer, 6.) a life of doing good, and 7.) your love for other Christians.
- **Have L3 conversations.** Use this formula to talk about Jesus: Loving3 x Listening3 x Learning3 = Reaching3. When you truly love people, deeply listen to them, and learn from them and God's word, you can reach them on a deep level—with God's help.

THE VIEW

- The number of Christian teenagers who say they've explained their beliefs to someone with different faith views in the last year declined from 63% in 1997 to 45% in 2009.
- Yet teenagers are among the most religiously active Americans, with nearly 60% engaged in some type of group spiritual activity in a typical week.
- Two out of three Christians make their commitment to Christ before turning 18.

(Barna Group)

PONDER THIS

- What does evangelism mean to you? Do you consider yourself to be an effective faith-sharer? Why or why not?
- How easy or difficult is it for you to discuss Jesus with other people? What is your personal faith-sharing style?
- How can your family work together to tell people about Jesus?





GOING DEEPER

Expert Insights for Parents of Teenagers

By Greg Stier

At SimplyYouthMinistry.com, Dare 2 Share president Greg Stier discusses the urgency of sharing Jesus with others:

Christians, especially adults, have lost their faith in the simple gospel message to truly transform lives. Most sing about its power on Sunday but don't carry that confidence to work on Monday.

What's the result of our failure to proclaim Jesus with our lives and lips? America is falling apart morally. We're keeping the cure to the cultural cancer of sin locked in our hearts. If we discovered the cure to the real disease of cancer, we'd share it with everyone,

wouldn't we? We'd "force our beliefs" on cancer victims out of love. We'd do our darndest to get them to accept the cure. We wouldn't say, "I'll just live out the cure and hope cancer victims see the cure in me."

Well, guess what? Those around us who don't know Jesus are headed somewhere infinitely worse than death. And we have the cure. Yet the average Christian has never shared it with their closest friends, coworkers, and neighbors.

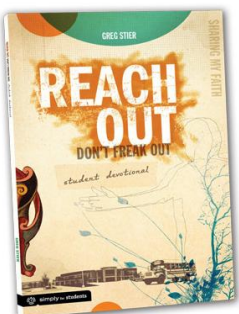
But I refuse to be discouraged. I have the privilege of training tens of thousands of Christian teenagers to share the cure, the

ultimate antidote to the poison and cancer of sin. What I see in the eyes of teenagers is a hunger. They believe in the power of the gospel.

At conferences, it's awesome to watch thousands of teenagers call up their friends and share the good news of Jesus. What's amazing is that they do it without blinking.

So I've got to ask: Are you sharing your faith? Think of one person you know who doesn't know Jesus. Pray for them and then give them a call. Let them know you have something important to talk about and set up a time to chat. Evangelism still works—but we must be willing to take the initiative.

RESOURCE



In the 30-day devotional *Reach Out...Don't Freak Out* (Simply Youth Ministry), Greg Stier offers motivation, tips, stories, and strategies that will help young people tell their friends about Jesus.

BIBLE FOCUS

For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes.

Romans 1:16

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

MAINSTREAM MUSIC



SLIPKNOT

Background: This metal band formed in 1995 and has sold more than 14 million records worldwide. The band always wears matching suits, and each member wears a unique mask. Their music is heavy, dark, and full of profanity. The trailer for the rerelease of their second album, *Iowa*, shows someone hanging a severed goat head onto nails, with a pentagram as an underlay.

Albums: *Iowa* (2011, 2001), *All Hope Is Gone* (2008), *Slipknot* (1999)

What Slipknot Says: In an interview about his book, which tries to diminish how bad the deadly sins are, singer Corey Taylor says, “I ask more questions about how can we be better people toward *each other* than worrying about the planet or worrying about this or that.... There’s a bigger issue, and it’s...why are we so ugly toward each other?”

Explore: You can watch the trailer for the reissue of *Iowa*. This video is *filled* with profanity, but if your kids are listening to Slipknot, you owe it to them to see the darkness and depravity the band admits to: youtube.com/watch?v=O6nstylji3s.

CHRISTIAN MUSIC



SEVENTH DAY SLUMBER

Background: This rock band was independent for 11 years until signing with Tooth & Nail in 2007. Frontman Joseph Rojas has an incredible testimony of drug addiction, an overdose, and a conversion in the back of an ambulance as he cried out to God in what he thought was his last moment. Since then, the band has had a strong heart for disaffected, fringe, and abandoned teenagers.

Albums: *Anthem of Angels* (2011), *Take Everything* (2009), *Once Upon a Shattered Life* (2005)

What Seventh Day Slumber Says: “There are things going on with Christian kids that no one wants to talk about because we’re supposed to be happy,” says singer Rojas. “We always paint Christ as the answer to hurting people and tough situations.”

Explore: You can listen to some of the band’s songs on their MySpace page: myspace.com/7thdayslumber.

MOVIES

Movie: *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn—Part 1*

Genre: Drama, Romance, Thriller

Rating: PG-13

Synopsis: Bella and Edward go to Rio for their honeymoon, and Bella soon becomes pregnant. The birth nearly kills Bella, and Edward has to decide whether to make her immortal.

Our Take: Although the “Twilight” books aren’t the hot commodities they once were, teenage girls still care deeply about Bella and her completely dysfunctional relationship with Edward. Blech.

Movie: *The Muppets*

Genre: Comedy, Family

Rating: PG

Synopsis: Some Muppets super-fans reunite the gang for a telethon so they can save the Muppet Theater from a nefarious oilman who’s trying to tear it down.

Our Take: I wasn’t sure teenagers would care about this—until I heard how much they LOVED *The Smurfs*. So maybe the beloved Muppets are poised for a comeback, too.

For more media discussions and ideas, go to www.MinistryandMedia.com.

VIDEO GAMES



The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim—The celebrated RPG (role-playing game) series returns, and your character must defeat a dragon god who’s prophesied to destroy the world. The world is *huge*, so you can sink hundreds of hours into the game. It’s rated M (mature) for intense violence, blood, and gore.

Saint’s Row 3—This sandbox-style game—similar to *Grand Theft Auto*—finds players leading up a crime syndicate and fighting against rival gangs. One of the early-release videos shows a completely nude female character parachuting off a high-rise building. So it isn’t exactly family-friendly. The rating is still pending but will likely be M (mature).

