



10 ACTION IDEAS FOR YOU AND YOUR TEENAGER'S SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

1. **What's your parenting goal?** Marko and Adam shared their goals for parenting; have you ever taken the time to articulate what your goal is? We've found that when a parent has a goal in mind, it helps keep stuff like social media in perspective. The next step would be to talk about this goal with your teenager, making him or her a partner in achieving that goal.
2. **Talk about family boundaries with your teenager.** Chances are good that one tension your teenager feels is that they don't want you to embarrass them online and vice versa. Setting up some family guidelines will help. For instance, if you like something they've posted on Facebook, are you going to "like" it or comment on it? Or would it be better to affirm them at dinner? Are you going to ask permission before tagging someone in a Facebook® or Instagram® picture?
3. **Set up a check in time for your digital devices.** Pick a time and place where all digital devices get plugged in and put away for the night. Make sure you lead by example on this one.
4. **Set up healthy habits.** We suggest that all Internet-connected devices be used in public places in the house.
5. **Ask critical-thinking questions.** When you talk about social media, ask big questions like, "Why do you think Instagram decided to add a web portal to their mobile app?" or "Do you think pictures on Snapchat really go away?" This will bring out transferable principles about social media as opposed to just thinking about rules or behavior.
6. **Discuss living for Jesus 24/7.** One upside of social media is that it helps us see how our friends live all the time, not just at home or at church. Have a conversation about how social media activity can reflect our relationship with Christ.



7. **Create a partnership of understanding.** Talk to your kids about figuring out social media stuff together. There will be times where you learn things they don't know and vice versa. If you partner together, you can all stay on top of what's going on.
8. **Affirm positive behavior; beware of warning signs.** Catch your teenager doing something good on social media, like connecting with an aunt or complimenting a friend. Conversely, keep an eye out for when things suddenly change. For instance, if they suddenly stop using their favorite application, dig into the reasons. You may discover that they've been cyberbullied or seen something they shouldn't have.
9. **Check in on each other.** Just like you are checking in on your kids' social media activity, invite them to check in on you.
10. **Talk to other parents.** Every parent of a teenager is trying to figure this stuff out. Talk to friends and co-workers to see what they are learning, to discover how they are managing healthy boundaries, and to share some of your hopes and/or frustrations about social media usage. Sometimes just having a peer who "gets it" can help you learn what's normal and what's not.