The Media-Wise Family Video Games



— Guides

The Media-Wise Family: Video Games

In today's digital age, video and computer games are among the most popular forms of entertainment for our children. As Christian parents, it is crucial we remain vigilant and mindful about the video games consumed by our young kids. The lost culture around us often promotes a worldview that may be contrary to our beliefs and values. The purpose of this guide is to provide tips on how to monitor and promote healthy media consumption, specifically with video and computer games, while emphasizing the importance of heart change over behavior modification.

1. Understand the Influence of Video Games

Video games have a significant influence on children's beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. It is critical to recognize that most video games do not align with our conservative Christian values. Take the time to understand the impact video games can have on your children's worldview and be proactive in guiding their gaming choices. While video games can have some benefits, it is important to be aware of the potential dangers they can pose to children. Here are some dangers of video games for kids, along with relevant statistics:

Violence and Aggression: Studies show that exposure to violent video games can increase aggressive thoughts, feelings and behaviors in children. Studies have also found a significant connection between violent video game exposure and increased aggression in children and adolescents.

Addiction and Excessive Screen Time: Video game addiction is a disconcerting reality, with some children becoming obsessed and spending excessive amounts of time playing games. According to a study published in the journal *Pediatrics*, about 8.5 percent of American youth between the ages of 8 and 18 exhibit signs of video game addiction.

Social Isolation: Excessive video game playing can lead to social isolation and a decrease in real-life social interactions. A study published in the journal *Computers in Human Behavior* found that excessive video game use was associated with lower social competence and higher levels of loneliness in adolescents.

Negative Impact on Academic Performance: Spending excessive time playing video games can negatively impact academic performance and school-related activities. A study published in the journal *Computers*

& Education found that higher video game usage was associated with lower academic achievement in adolescents.

2. Set Clear Boundaries

Establish clear guidelines and boundaries regarding video game consumption in your home. This includes setting limits on screen time, specifying appropriate content, and creating gaming-free zones or times. Consistency is key in enforcing these boundaries.

3. Research and Vet Video Games

Before allowing your children to play or purchase any video game, research and vet it thoroughly. Look for reviews, ratings and recommendations from trusted sources. Consider the game's content, themes and messages portrayed. Three resources that can assist you in this process are:

Plugged In: Plugged In (pluggedin.com) is a comprehensive resource that provides reviews and ratings for movies, TV shows, and video games from a Christian perspective. It offers valuable insights into the content, themes and messages portrayed in various media.

Common Sense Media: Common Sense Media (commonsensemedia. org) provides age-based ratings and reviews for movies, TV shows, books, and video games. It offers guidance on appropriate content for different age groups, helping you make informed decisions about your child's gaming choices.

Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB): The ESRB (esrb.org) is an organization that assigns age and content ratings to video games. It provides information about the game's content, including violence, language and mature themes. Use the ESRB ratings as a guide to determine whether a game is suitable for your child.

4. Apply Age-Appropriate Filters

Many gaming consoles and platforms offer parental control features that allow you to apply age-appropriate filters. Take advantage of these features to restrict access to games that are not suitable for your child's age group. This helps ensure they are only exposed to content that aligns with your conservative Christian values.

5. Limit Access to Online Game Stores

Online game stores often have a wide range of games, including those with mature content or inappropriate themes. To promote healthy media

consumption, limit your children's access to the entire online game store. Instead, preselect and approve games that are suitable for their age and align with your values.

6. Monitor Online Interactions

Many video games allow players to chat and interact with strangers online. It is vital to monitor and restrict your children's online interactions to ensure their safety and protect them from harmful influences. Encourage them to play games with friends you know or within a controlled online community.

7. Focus on Heart Change

While it is essential to monitor and limit the video games your children consume, remember that true transformation comes from a change of heart rather than mere behavior modification. Focus on nurturing a personal relationship with God and teaching biblical principles that will guide their decision-making process.

As parents, it is our responsibility to vet and limit the video games played by our young kids. We must be actively involved in our children's video game habits, set limits on screen time, and ensure that the games they play are age-appropriate and align with their values. Open communication and monitoring can help mitigate the potential dangers associated with video game use. By setting clear boundaries, researching and vetting video games, applying age-appropriate filters, limiting access to online game stores, monitoring online interactions, and focusing on heart change, we can guide our children toward healthy media consumption. Remember to utilize resources such as Plugged In, Common Sense Media, and the ESRB to assist you in this journey. Together, we can protect our children's hearts and minds from the dangerous influences of the culture around us.

For additional resources, scan code:



