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YAYA CONNECT

Authentic Ministry - Intentional Learning - Resource Giving



LISTENING TO THE HURT: TEENAGE BOYS & THE FAITH TO SEE THEM FULLY

In the Netflix miniseries *Adolescence*, we meet Jamie Miller—a quiet 13-year-old boy accused of a violent crime. What starts as a crime drama slowly unfolds into a deep dive into online radicalization, emotional suppression, and the haunting question: What led a boy like Jamie here?

Through the lens of Jamie's life, *Adolescence* forces viewers to confront the real crisis happening around us—teenage boys are struggling. Many feel unseen, misunderstood, and overwhelmed by the pressure to conform to toxic versions of masculinity. In the shadows of algorithms and unfiltered group chats, boys are being shaped by online figures, harmful ideologies, and silence. The show holds up a mirror to systems that fail them: schools, families, churches, and society itself.

This story isn't fiction—it's a reflection. And as a faith community, we must ask: where are we in this story? Are we listening? Are we present? Or are we missing the quiet cries for connection, identity, and healing?

As disciples of Jesus, we're called to recognize pain, challenge injustice, and create space for wholeness. Especially for the ones the world overlooks.

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Adolescence isn't just a show—it's a wake-up call. Our faith demands more than reaction; it invites radical presence. Let us be a Church that sees, listens, and shows young people—especially boys—what love, healing, and wholeness truly look like.

Suggested Practices:

- **The Mirror & the Mask:** Invite youth to create two images: one of the “mask” they wear in the world, and one of the person God sees. Reflect together on Psalm 139:14—what makes it hard to live as your full, authentic self?
- **Justice & Jesus Circles:** Facilitate a series exploring how incel culture, toxic masculinity, and online bullying distort God's design for relationship and identity. Connect themes to Jesus' call to love, serve, and uplift the vulnerable.
- **Digital Examen Practice:** Guide youth in a digital inventory. Who are their top 5 most-watched influencers or content creators? What values are being reinforced? How might they choose digital spaces that nourish rather than numb?

Discussion Questions:

- What pressures do boys face around strength, emotion, and identity? How does Jesus model a new way of being?
- When have you felt unseen or misunderstood? Who helped you feel known—and what does that reveal about the kind of church we need to be?
- How does online culture influence the way we see ourselves and each other? What role does faith play in resisting harmful narratives?

FAITH & SCREENS: GUIDING YOUTH WITH LOVE, NOT CONTROL

Teens today live in a world where screens often shape identity, relationships, and self-worth. With algorithms designed to keep them locked in and content that can range from life-giving to harmful, youth need more than rules—they need community, conversation, and care.

Faith communities can be powerful spaces to help teens develop critical thinking, emotional wisdom, and spiritual discernment around screen use. We're not called to monitor every click—but to walk alongside our youth as they learn to reflect, choose, and grow in love

Suggested Practices:

- **Pause & Reflect:** Begin youth group with a “screen audit”—what content has been uplifting or draining this week?
- **Blessed Boundaries:** Explore the idea of sacred rest. How might we reclaim Sabbath from screens?

Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean to be spiritually awake in a digital world?
- How can we show up online with the same love and justice we preach offline?

APRIL BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Faith for Exiles: 5 Ways for a New Generation to Follow Jesus in Digital Babylon** by David Kinnaman & Mark Matlock : Offers insight into how Gen Z navigates faith in a screen-saturated culture. Good for adult leaders guiding digital discipleship.
- **Holy Troublemakers & Unconventional Saints** by Daneen Akers: Beautifully illustrated, storytelling-driven book featuring diverse spiritual leaders. Inspiring for intergenerational or confirmation groups.



TERM OF THE MONTH: SACRED REST

Over the past three months, we've been unpacking what it means to call something "sacred." From the fire of Sacred Rage now to the stillness of Sacred Rest, we're learning that sacredness shows up in both movement and pause.

Sacred Rest is more than just sleep or a break—it's a holy act of resistance against a world that says our value comes from busyness, performance, or perfection. It's choosing to believe that rest isn't weakness—it's wisdom. Rest reconnects us with our bodies, emotions, and God. It's where we remember we are already enough.

For youth and young adults, rest can feel out of reach—jam-packed schedules, digital fatigue, and the pressure to "keep up" are real. Sacred Rest invites us to slow down, to breathe, and to listen—to ourselves, to God, and to what our spirits need.

Suggested Practices:

- **Rest as Resistance:** Reflect on how rest can disrupt harmful patterns of hustle culture and burnout.
- **Communal Rest:** Begin group gatherings with a grounding ritual like gentle music, a body scan, or a breath prayer.
- **Sabbath Moments:** Encourage small sabbaths, intentional pauses in your day of joy, silence, or solitude.

Discussion Questions:

- What makes rest feel hard or uncomfortable for you?
- How might God be speaking in your moments of stillness?
- What would it look like to create a culture of sacred rest in our community?

GRADUATING TO LIFE: ROOTED NOT RUSHED

Adulthood comes at you fast. Suddenly, you're expected to map out your future, manage bills, pursue purpose, and "live your best life"—all at once. Social media doesn't help. It makes it look like everyone else is already successful, in love, and fully self-aware by 25. It's a lie.

Faith isn't a race or a performance. It's formation. God isn't asking for speed; He's inviting you to be steady. Jeremiah 17:7–8 describes the person who trusts in God as a tree rooted by water. That tree faces heat and drought—but it doesn't panic. Why? Because its roots run deep.

You won't always feel strong or certain. You won't have all the answers. But when your identity is rooted in Christ—not comparison, achievement, or timelines—you'll grow in ways that last. That kind of growth isn't always visible. But it's real. And it prepares you to stand firm when life gets hard.

Suggested Practices:

- Journal about where you feel pressure to "arrive." Ask the creator to grow within you instead.
- Fast from social media for a week. Notice how it affects your mind and spirit.
- Commit to a small group or spiritual friendship where honesty and prayer are regular, not rare.

Discussion Questions:

- What areas of your life feel driven by comparison right now?
- How do you respond when progress feels slow or invisible?
- What does it look like for you to grow "roots" in this season—not just results?