

BETTER CHOICES

Q3 BETTER CHOICES - SCREEN TIME

PLAYLIST

<https://open.spotify.com/user/campuslife1965>

PURPOSE

We may be saying something similar every week of this series but the purpose of this week isn't to go to the extreme and tell students to delete all of their social media, give up television and only listen to Christian music; rather we want to present some points for them to consider in order to make better choices about screen time on their own.

NOTE TO SITE DIRECTOR

We would encourage you to be communicating with parents throughout the year but especially throughout this series. Truth is that some parents will want you to discuss these topics with their student while others won't and it's good to give them a heads up on the content. We would encourage you to send out or post to social media the letter to the parent explaining why we are having these conversations with some aid for continued discussion at home (Parent Letter Sample is enclosed in the curriculum folder).

At Home Discussion Starters for Screen time:

1. If you could choose just 3 apps to have on your phone so that you'd feel like you're not left out of things and that help you fit in with the rest of your friends, which three would you choose? Why are those three the most important?
2. What are some boundaries that we can together put up around screen time that would be helpful but not leave you feeling left out or behind?
3. What are some different ways you see the things that your friends watch, listen to or scroll affecting them?

4. Share a time when you said or did something that was influenced by something you watched, saw as you scrolled, listened to etc. Have there been things that you've done just because you saw or listened to something?
5. I know you talked a lot about input-output this week at Campus Life, what are some things that you could input more of in order to output the kind of person you want to be?

NOTE: This podcast is a great one to help you think about screen time and your student: *The Happy Hour Podcast Episode 340 with Tracy Foster*

This would be a great time to host a viewing party for parents/the community of the social media and create some discussion around the film on how the concepts could play out for their teen.

MINISTRY LEADER EMPOWERMENT

Get Ministry Leaders involved:

Every week of this series, we will kick off with a welcome competition between a leader and a student. Try to get a different leader involved each week

- Have a different leader lead each game while all of the other leaders jump in and play! Students need to see us interacting with them as fun in order to open up to us
- If you have a leader that feels passionately about screen time d, prep them to lead this wrap up
- Our ultimate goal would be that each ministry leader walks away with an appointment with a different student each week of this series

RMA CONNECTION

APPOINTMENTS

Conversations around these topics can be shameful and awkward: Students will be more likely to open up to a trusted leader in a place where not a lot of their peers are so think about meeting in the corner of a coffee shop where the student's back is to the rest of the place so they feel a sense of privacy. Also remember to do more listening than talking in these conversations despite how easy it can go into "fix-it" mode. Coach your leaders to practice their shocked faces, to offer empathy and to stay away from phrases like "are you praying about this".

PREP

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- Slides with actions for Welcome Warm-Up or large pieces of paper with the actions written on them
- Candy for winning team of Bedlam
- 5 posterboards/giant post-it notes/paper

- Markers/Writing Utensils

WELCOME

Welcome to another week of the Better Choices series! So far leaders have won _____ of our welcome warm-ups and students, you've won _____. Remember, students if you win more at the end of this series you'll win _____. This week we are going to start with some quick reverse charades so who thinks that they can be a quicker guesser than _____? (*call up one student and the leader that you already discussed this with*). I'm going to show all of you an action and you are going to have to all act it out without any talking or sound effects and whoever guesses first will get a point. The first person to three points will win this week's warm-up!

Potential Actions:

An elephant has massive diarrhea
A giraffe paints a picture
The baby bit my thumb off
There's a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow
I chugged the milk and then threw up
The rollercoaster broke when I was on it

CROWDBREAKER

BEDLAM

DIRECTIONS: This is probably the craziest game we have in the Campus Life game book but it is one of my faves! We are going to split up into the four corners; leaders are going to go around and help make sure that the groups are pretty close to even. I'm going to call out a movement and your goal is for your entire team to make it to the diagonal corner and sit down first. If you do, you'll get a point and the first team to 5 points wins! *Leader - make sure students know the goal is not to hurt anyone and they are to avoid collisions!*

Potentials Movements:

Walk Backwards	Bear Crawl
Hop on One Foot	Skip
Crab Walk	Gallop
Wheelbarrow Race with Partner	Piggy Back with Partner
Army Crawl	Snake Slither

DIGITS

DIRECTIONS: Everyone is going to find a partner. Each person must stand up facing a partner, with their hands behind their backs. They will then hold out any number of fingers of their choice. On the count of three, each partner brings their hands to the front and whoever adds up all digits (their own fingers included) first, wins. The person who loses sits down, while the winner goes on to pair up with another

person who won. Continue this way until you are down to 6-8 and then bring them to the front for everyone to watch. If you don't want an elimination game, then have everyone keep track of their wins and give a prize to whoever has the most after time runs out.

SMALL GROUP GAMES

[VIEW SMALL GROUP GAME & ACTIVITY IDEAS HERE](#)

*** PLAY DIGITS (ABOVE) but instead of breaking up into partners, have your entire small group put their hands behind their backs and on go throw out a number of fingers. The first person to call out the correct number gets to vote someone out. Keep going until one person is left.

If you are working with smaller groups, we recommend playing **ALPHABET POCKETS** and **SILENT ORDER** for this Club. You can access supplies needed and gameplay instructions by utilizing the link above.

VIRTUAL GAMES

[VIEW VIRTUAL GAME IDEAS HERE](#)

*** PLAY DIGITS (ABOVE) just have each member of your Zoom throw up a number of fingers and the first person to correctly count all of them gets to vote someone out of the game. Keep going until there is one winner.

If you are working with students in a virtual setting, we recommend playing **THE COUNT** and **WHAT DO YOU MEME** for this Club. You can access supplies needed and gameplay instructions by utilizing the link above.

TRANSITION

Digits is one of the Campus Life games that I am the absolute worst at because I'm so bad at math - seriously it was always my lowest grade! Though I hate math, today's topic is actually centered in some math that I learned in high school. We used to have to make these tables for equations and make sure that what we input into the equation was equal to what we outputted. Input equals output, my teacher used to dance around and say. The same is true for our bodies and today, we are going to talk about one of the main modes of input into our bodies today: screens. But before we get into how screen time relates to that math concept, let's break up into small groups!

DISCUSSION

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) I'm going to give you a minute to count up all of the screens in your household- video game systems, phones, computers, laptops, iPad, iPod etc. How many screens do you have in your household? Did this number surprise you when you counted?
- 2) If you could only keep one device/screen, which one would you keep? Why?
- 3) How do you think devices and screens have positively affected the world and middle schoolers?
- 4) How do you think devices and screens have negatively affected the world and middle schoolers?
- 5) What do you think that parents/adults don't understand about middle schoolers and devices/screens?
- 6) Do you have any rules either from your parents or yourself on things that you won't watch or music that you won't listen to? Why do you think these are important?

GOING DEEPER

- 1) How do you think things would have been different if bible times had devices and screens?
- 2) Do you think that Jesus would have had social media? What do you think he would watch on Netflix? Do you think he would have preached via lives or TikTok?
- 3) Clearly the Bible doesn't say anything about screen time because they weren't around. Are there parts of the Bible that you think apply to screen time and social media? (Think about idolatry, immorality etc.)

WRAP UP

When I was younger, my little brother was obsessed with this television show called "Dirty Jobs" where this guy went around doing some of the grossest jobs for a few days. It wasn't bad but wasn't good. Suddenly, cuss words started creeping out of my four-year-old brother's mouth even though my family never cussed, and he wasn't around anyone who did. Over time, we determined that Jake was learning these words from watching Dirty Jobs. He didn't know what he was saying or that these words were bad, he just knew that the host said them, and he liked the host, so he started saying them. It's pretty hard to teach a small child to not say those words so we ended up having to force him to stop watching his favorite show for a while until he learned.

We told you earlier that we were going to talk about math and input and output and my little brother's story shows how that concept relates to our own bodies. Your eyes and ears (and taste and touch but we are going to skip those two today) are your main sources of input for your body - what you see and what you hear tells you so much about the world and people around you. What you might not often think about is what you input through your eyes and ears goes straight to your mind and affects your thoughts and whatever is in your mind eventually affects your output or your actions, words etc. In short, what you see and hear will eventually become what you say and do. You've probably heard of the saying, "you are what you eat" but more so, you are what you watch and listen to. You may not always feel like you are in charge of your thoughts, actions or words but you are and paying attention to what you watch and listen to are big ways that you can affect those things for the better or for the worse.

Statistically, students your age spend about eight hours a day or more on a screen. Statistics would also tell you that your generation has higher levels of anxiety and depression than ever before. There are all kinds of studies that show how what you look at on your screens affect your life - social media and constantly seeing the best picture-perfect moments of other's lives negatively affect our self-esteem; violent video games and certain types of music desensitize us to the same kind of violence and make us think things aren't as big of a deal as they are; and hours of mindless bingeing or endlessly scrolling enable us to numb our emotions and feel less motivation.

Romans 12:2, the verse that we've been talking about this whole series says, "Don't conform to the patterns of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds". The patterns of this world would tell you that you have to have social media to be in; that you have to have the latest gaming system so you can play with your friends; that you have to craft a social media brand so others can appreciate you; that you have to watch certain shows or know all the words to certain songs to be cool. But let's spend time this week looking at the second half of that verse "be transformed by the renewing of your minds". One definition of renew means to begin again or to restore. Something that you should know is that when God first created us, he intended only good for us - to only experience good, to only have the best thoughts and to only do what is right. Pretty early on, this thing called sin entered the world and made things less than that - humans no longer had only good thoughts nor did only right. Being transformed by the renewal of our minds means to begin our minds again as God created them to be that our eyes and ears and, in turn our minds are only filled with good not just the things that are popular.

As the input, output concept goes, in order to renew our minds, we have to renew what our eyes and ears take in. It may feel like we have to watch certain things, be on certain apps or listen to certain things, but the truth is all of that is our choice. If we know that something is negatively affecting us, we don't have to take part in it. I'm not saying to never watch TV or be on social media or that you have to only listen to music about Jesus, but how can you use those things to help renew your mind? Maybe it's turning on your screen time settings so your phone goes to sleep at a certain time or making sure you get off your video games at a certain time so that you can get enough sleep. Maybe it's not listening to certain songs that talk about inappropriate topics so that you don't randomly use certain words or talk about certain topics. Maybe it's only following accounts on social media that make you a better person or even adding in some Jesus-centered accounts.

RESPONSE

Maybe you've never really thought about how the things that you watch or listen to affect you. I want to give you a bit of time to think about your life. On the wall, you'll see several poster boards - one that says social media, one that says TV, one that says music and one that says video games. In these next few moments, grab a marker and go to as many of those poster boards that are applicable to you and write one way you can see that it that area of screen time as negatively or positively affected your life. It's okay if there are repeats, I'm sure there will be, just write what is true for you.

On the last poster board, it says "RENEW", I want everyone to spend some time at that board and write down one thing you can do this week to take a step towards renewing your mind instead of just giving into the patterns of screen time.

*For larger groups, this exercise can be difficult. Feel free to split back into smaller groups and do this on pieces of paper that get passed around.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SITE DIRECTOR - list any announcements here that you need to communicate to your group before Club concludes!

HEAD'S UP

NEXT WEEK | BETTER CHOICES: YOUR BODY

We will look at the different topics of self-harm, eating disorders and substance abuse.