

Teenagers and jobs—a good fit?



Getting that first part-time job is an important teenage milestone. And today's kids are working more than ever. Young people ages 15 to 17 work an average of 17 hours a week during the school year. But unlike previous generations of teenagers, who had to contribute to the family income, most of today's young workers engage in "luxury employment," meaning they're the chief beneficiaries. Kids' #1 reason for working, research shows, is to support a materialistic lifestyle.

Experts warn that overworked teenagers get stressed out, let schoolwork and friendships slide, and have less of the "down time" necessary for personal growth. In other words, kids' earnings don't make up for what they're losing.

Of course, part-time jobs have advantages, too. Work experience teaches teenagers responsibility and important life skills. Jobs, especially during the summer, offer extended opportunities to explore interests and expand on classroom education. Kids learn to manage their time, deal with supervisors and the public, and budget their earnings.

If your teenagers are itching to work, give it a trial-run this summer. Keep their interests in mind as you search together for safe, appropriate jobs. Then touch base frequently to see how everything's going. Above all, reinforce the fact that young people's main job is to get a good education—so they're not earning minimum wage for long. Read on for ideas about "supervising" the young employees in your household.

As your teenagers enter the world of work, keep this advice in mind:

1. Learn as much as possible about a prospective job ahead of time.
2. Don't pressure teenagers to work if they don't feel ready. Instead, offer more allowance for increased chores.
3. Explore entrepreneurial efforts (house-sitting, dog-walking, errand-running, etc.).
4. Remember that some of the best jobs pay the least. Teenagers can learn a lot at internships and can make a difference by volunteering.
5. If young workers keep good grades, allow them to increase their on-the-job hours.
6. Help teenagers manage their paychecks. Encourage them to save some money and also give some back to God.
7. Watch for clues about whether kids enjoy their part-time jobs. Keep an eye out for changing moods or diminished interest in school, activities, or friendships.



"Good news/bad news" statistics about working teenagers reflect the subject's pros and cons. Deciding if (or how much) your kids work involves lots of factors. For example:

Teenagers who work in excess of 15 to 20 hours per week are more likely to use drugs, drink alcohol, and smoke than their unemployed peers.

(University of Wisconsin;
American Journal of Public Health)

Adults who worked up to 20 hours a week as high school seniors earn 22% more than their classmates who didn't work.

(University of North Carolina)



Great Questions to Ask Your Kids

Begin a conversation with your teenagers about their thoughts and attitudes toward work. Use these questions to get started:

1. Do you think you're ready for a part-time job? If so, how many hours a week are appropriate, and why?
2. What are the main reasons you want to work? Do you feel like you *have* to work? Why or why not?
3. What kinds of part-time jobs do you think you'd be best at, and why?
4. What rewards do you expect from a job? Would you work for free? Why or why not?
5. How can people tell if they're working too much? Do you think you'll fall into this trap? Why or why not?



Focus on Prayer

PRAY THAT:

1. God will give your teenagers a positive attitude about all kinds of work (schoolwork, household chores, and outside employment).
2. God will lead your teenagers to meaningful job opportunities that develop their talents and nurture their interests.
3. God will help your teenagers manage their time wisely and keep their priorities in check.
4. God will direct your teenagers to fulfilling careers as adults.

Verse of the month

“Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.” (Galatians 3:23-24)

When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, work became a hardship that people had to endure. Jobs are often tiring and frustrating, but the ability to work using our God-given talents is also a blessing. Through our labors, we're able to care for our families, contribute to society, and further the Lord's kingdom. God, who provides our jobs, is our ultimate “boss.” Everything we do, whether at home or at work, should glorify him. And the “pay” is out of this world!

What's Up With Kids

Today's teenagers are busier than ever, with packed schedules that mirror those of their parents. When it comes to maintaining a work-play balance, what kind of role model are you? Work is important, but so is knowing when to take a break from it. Scripture is filled with reminders to “be still,” rest from our work, and focus on God's presence.

At SimplyYouthMinistry.com, youth pastor Kurt Johnston shares these reflections about working—and not working:

“My pastor, Rick Warren, likes to say, ‘He who burns the candle at both ends isn't as bright as he thinks he is.’ Right now, it feels like my candle is burning on both ends and in the middle!.... I'm not the poster-child for balanced living, but I'm re-committing to giving it my best effort. Maybe you should, too.

All of us are busy, and most of us are busy doing really good things. As we head into summer, I would suggest that it's a good time for all of us to evaluate how we spend our time, what we allow as priorities and the pace we've set for our lives. When's the last time you slept in on a Saturday? When's the last time you and your spouse watched an old movie on TV? Have you gone for a bike ride with your kids lately? Can you remember the last time you actually wasted a day? I think it's time for me to get busy; and it may be for you as well. Time for us to get busy doing nothing!”



MUSIC SPOTLIGHT



Background: Before Jack Johnson was writing and performing his relaxed, acoustic-based songs, the Hawaii native was a champion surfer. But a serious accident convinced him to focus on music instead. Johnson, 33, initially wrote songs to go with a surfing documentary while in film school. But then he got noticed for his mix of blues, folk, hip-hop, and modern rock. The passionate environmentalist has sold more than 15 million albums.

Albums: *Sleep Through the Static* (2008), *Sing-alongs and Lullabies for the Film Curious George* (2006), *In Between Dreams* (2005)

What Parents Should Know: Johnson's songs deal with topics ranging from personal relationships to the war in Iraq and the environment. His lyrics are considered poetic but can be very metaphorical and confusing.

What Jack Johnson Says: "It's easy to look at the world and get upset about the state of affairs. Instead, what you have to do is just accept things the way they are and try to always make them better and work toward a better place."

Discussion Questions: How do you feel when you watch the news or hear about what's happening in the world? Do you think things will get better or worse, and why? How can you (or our family) make the world a better, more hopeful place?



Background: Singer-songwriter Mat Kearney left his Oregon hometown to play soccer at Chico State University, dubbed America's #1 party school. Kearney, who admitted selling marijuana in high school, fit in well at college at first. But then he hit rock bottom and discovered the "bleakness" of that lifestyle. He began pouring himself into his music. Kearney, 29, has toured with John Mayer and Sheryl Crow, and he headlined a VH1 tour last spring.

Albums: *Nothing Left to Lose* (2006), *Bullet* (2004)

What Parents Should Know: Don't think that Kearney has compromised his Christian faith because his songs are played on mainstream shows such as "Grey's Anatomy," "The Hills," and "One Tree Hill." Kearney's lyrics will challenge teenagers spiritually.

What Mat Kearney Says: "God found me when I was at my lowest point. That was the first time in my life when I really felt like I understood who Jesus was. It was more than just knowing about him; I felt like he met me in that time and place."

Discussion Questions: Do you think people are more receptive to the Gospel when they're struggling? Why or why not? Why do you suppose some people see their need for Jesus only when they hit "rock bottom"? How would you describe your relationship with God? Have you ever encountered God? Explain.

FILMWATCH

Movie: *Speed Racer* (released May 9)

Genre: Action/adventure

Cast: Emile Hirsch, Christina Ricci, Matthew Fox, Susan Sarandon

Rating: This film is not yet rated.

Synopsis: The Wachowski Brothers ("The Matrix") direct this adaptation of the classic "old-school" cartoon. A rich mogul, tired of Speed Racer always winning, offers a million dollars to anyone who takes out Speed Racer in the next big race. Speed Racer takes charge of his car, Mach 5, as he battles his biggest competitor, Racer X.

Discussion Questions: How important to you is winning? Are you willing to cut corners to come out on top? Why or why not? How would you rate your sportsmanship, and why?



May 2008

| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|------------|----|--|---|---|--|
| | | | | | BK 7:11am | |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Hand bells play in worship Junior High camp \$ DUE!! Parenting Video 9:45am Confirmation 2pm | | | G3 5pm 7 th grade Adopt a Highway 5:45p Genesis 7:30p Senior High Alive 8pm Senior High Camp \$\$ DUE!! | First Lutheran Serves at the Banquet in Sioux Falls | BK 7:11am | |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| Parenting Video 9:45am Happy Mother's Day!! | | | Early Dismissal G3 5pm Genesis 7:30p Last Senior High Alive 8pm | | BK 7:11am G3 Party 6pm-10pm | Senior High Trip to help with Spring Cleaning at Church 8a |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| Parenting Video 9:45am G3 Dances at both services | | | Informational meeting for National Youth Gathering 09 7pm! Youth and Parents!! | | BK 7:11am | |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |
| | No School! | | | Seniors RSVP for the reception.... | BK 7:11am School's out! for summer!! | |