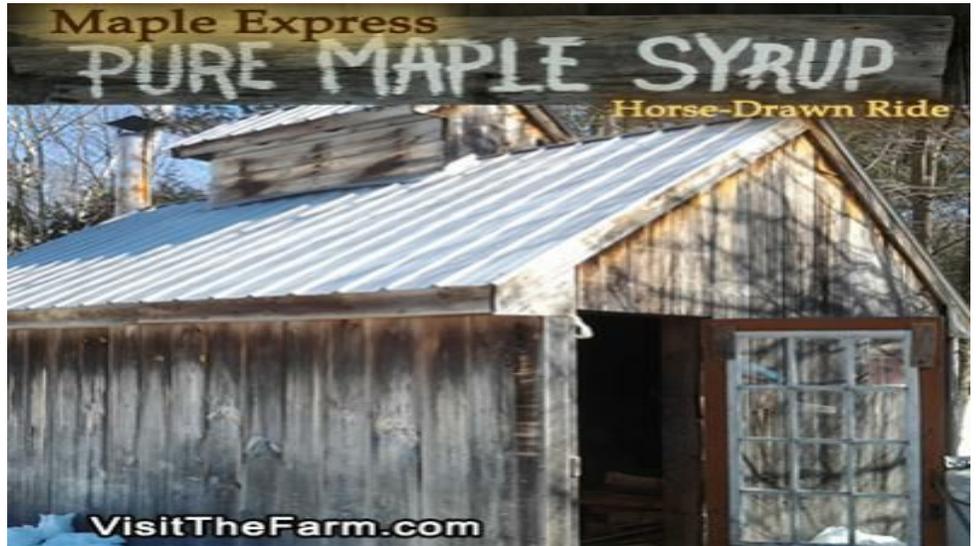




PARENT CONNECT

A BRIDGE BETWEEN PARENTS AND YOUTH MINISTRY



DETAILS:

Date: Sat March 14

Time: Gather at FPCC 8.30am. Return to FPCC at approx 3pm.

Cost: \$20 (If this is an issue please let me know and we'll take care of it)

RSVP: firstparishyouth@yahoo.com

Numbers are limited to the first 15 so be in quick!

THE MAPLE EXPRESS

Hi everyone,

Spring is on the doorstep, and warmer weather is finally coming! The snow is still on the ground though, so we figured we might as well make the most of it. On Sat March 14 we are going to New Hampshire to ride The Maple Express, a horse drawn sled that will journey us through the snow to an authentic sugar shack where we will see maple syrup being made and then sample it on some tasty pancakes. We hope your young person can join us. Numbers are limited and rsvp's are a must.

During our Wednesday night youth events we are still working our way through our study of Exodus - Experiencing Freedom. I hope you have been able to use the weekly study guides as a discussion starter with your young person. As well as being truly epic in its scope, the book of Exodus is an incredible portrait of the character of God. Over and over again we see the steadfast love of God, his relational nature, his faithfulness to his promises, his hearing of his people's cries, his seeing their struggles, and his acting to bring them salvation. In

Exodus 34:6 the Lord declares to Moses that He is a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. We see this character ultimately expressed in the death and resurrection of Jesus which we celebrate at Easter. It is in our worship of this true God where we find our true freedom, true identity and true life. We pray our young people come to discover this more fully as we journey together.

Thank you for all you do as parents and caregivers. We are privileged to support you.

Chris



By Chris Dodds



YOUTH CULTURE



A WORD FROM THE WORD

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

Philippians 1:9-11 (NIV)

WHAT IS GOING IN?

We live in a consumer culture. Our kids ‘want’ something they’ve seen on television, the internet or at a friend’s house. A similar type of ‘consuming’ we need to be aware of are the messages our students are absorbing! The reality is we are being given messages all the time from the world around us. Many students find themselves in the tough spot of continually hearing happiness or complete-ness comes from the acquisition of ‘one more thing’. Being aware of the subtle messages our kids are being exposed to helps us as parents open dialogue and engage in communication while looking for the truths of God. A few tips to accomplish this:

1. Regularly connect with your teen about the messages being downloaded into his or her brain. Ask them to tell ‘stories’ about (summarize) what they’ve watched recently, then follow up with questions like “what truth did you see in that?” or “what emotions did that illicit in you?”

2. Be sincerely honest about monitoring them.

Don’t sneak or go all James Bond on them, but remind them how much you want to stay involved in their lives. Help them understand that having access to social media accounts and talking about media messages is not an invasion of privacy, it’s a love-invasion that you have launched on behalf of the relationship.

3. Share your information freely. Watch a movie together and openly share your thoughts, ideas or questions. Sometimes our kids want to hear our internal dialogue, as much as we want to hear theirs.

In all areas, stay connected and ‘in-the-know’ by keeping the lines of communication open and flowing. Hearing what is coming out helps you identify what is going in!

By Darren Sutton

A couple of thoughts

I recently watched a fascinating documentary called *Generation Like*. It is an expose on what happens when the traditional teenage quest for identity and connection goes online. It’s well worth a watch and might be an interesting one to watch with a teenager. The DVD is available at the library in Wakefield.

Our local schools seem to be doing an excellent job of providing workshops, panel discussions and information evenings about online trends, so keep an eye out for these and stay informed and involved. Let’s also keep our teachers, sports coaches, drama and music teachers in our prayers as they invest their time in nurturing our young people.



IN THEIR WORLD

SHAZAM!

This isn't just an exclamation for Gomer Pyle anymore. But the term still packs the same wonderment and excitement.

Shazam is a free music app that instantly tells users what song they're listening to and directs them how to purchase it, if desired.

When activated, Shazam "listens" through your smartphone to whatever music is playing—in the car, in a store, or even in a crowded restaurant. Then it spits out the name of the song and the artist performing it.

The app even keeps a weekly tally of the top 100 songs that people are searching with it, so parents can stay attuned to music trends. Check it out at shazam.com.



WHEN YOUR KIDS GET KANYE'D

"Kanye'd" is a new term brought on by awards-show hijinks. It's that moment when you've done something amazing yet another person tries to diminish it. That happens to teenagers every day.

Maybe you saw a clip from the 2009 VMA's, when Kanye West rushed the stage after Taylor Swift won Best Female Video. The rapper grabbed the microphone—and the spotlight—announcing why Beyonce should've received the award instead.

Then at this year's Grammys, West headed toward the stage when Beck won Album of the Year. Although he backed away, West later expressed disgust at the outcome.

Most people write off such bad behavior as celebrities seeking attention. But your teenagers face similar outcries and protests. "You didn't deserve that," they hear. Or "I deserved it more." Rarely, if ever, do kids admit the deep hurt when someone lessens the

achievement of a hard-earned A- with an arrogant, "Well, I got an A, and I didn't even study."

You can offset the frustration of those "Kanye" moments by reminding kids that you love them, treasure them, and are proud of them. Although teenagers may feign resistance at such encouragement and insist you're only saying that because you're their parent, know that they never tire of hearing it.

In the vast sea of everything that parents must say, words of encouragement provide an essential life vest as kids tread the waters of adolescence. So among the reminders to "Do your homework," "Take out the trash," and "Please don't wreck my car," add statements that will lift young spirits. Say, "No one makes me smile like you do," or "Thanks for not being the crazy, disrespectful kid I was," or "I just want you to know how much I love you, even when I forget to say it."

