

Kylie, Kids, and Calendars

WALT MUELLER, CPYU President



YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

“There’s an image that I feel constantly pressured to keep up with. In order to stay relevant for the public, I have to be on Instagram and I have to be on Snapchat just keeping people entertained. And then there’s who I really am around my friends. That’s who I want you guys to get to know. It’s way easier for me to post on Snapchat or Instagram than it is to be out in public. I just feel like for so long I’ve been putting on this different persona to the world—I felt like I started to depend on social media, feeling the need to post all the time. I feel like I have to keep up this idea of who I am.”

Kylie Jenner, speaking about extreme fame on her television show, *Life of Kylie*, August 6, 2017



The old one’s are down and the new one’s are up. Last year is history and so are my 2018 calendars that have been hanging at home and the office for the last twelve months. And like I do every year, I’ve carefully chosen my replacement calendars for 2019. . . each one complete with images that somehow bring joy every time I look in their direction. I’ve spent complete years looking at pictures of dogs, barns, lighthouses, and even some of my favorite baseball players. For me, 2019 is the year of New England landscapes!

It says a lot about ourselves and our culture when we look at the recent history of calendars. Over the course of my lifetime, calendars have shifted from serving more of a utilitarian purpose to being expressions of who we are. Consider that this time of year, most malls feature a kiosk full of 2019 calendar options. A quick scan reveals that calendars serve the same purpose for our kids, much like the personalized covers that are designed both to protect smartphones and to express one’s self.

Some of the most popular teen calendars feature our kids’ pop culture heroes and role models, many of them pop culture icons. These are the folks who map out life for our kids by giving them a sense of what to aspire to in life while defining those things that really matter. Because they admire and love these celebrities, our kids will invite them into their bedrooms to prominently hang on the wall for the next twelve months. And each and every day as our kids glance countless times in their direction, they not only tell kids what day it

is, but what to believe and how to behave. You see, culture serves our kids as a *map*, guiding them through life by giving them advice on what to think and how to act.

For example, one of this year’s hottest selling and most highly publicized pictorial calendars comes from 21-year-old reality-TV and social media personality, Kylie Jenner. With over 100 million social media followers, the famous-for-being-famous Jenner has great influence on our kids. She spurs kids on to be rich and famous. Her 2019 calendar features a series of sexually and materialistically provocative photos which promote the idea that this is *the way life is* and *the way life ought to be*.

Parents, take a look at the calendars your kids are choosing to hang on their walls. Carefully reading both text and photos can clue you in to your teen’s hopes, dreams, and desires. Ask them about why they’ve chosen their particular calendar. If you discover that the calendar choice and message promotes things that the Scriptures call “good, true, right, and honorable,” be sure to affirm those things. And where a calendar might send messages contrary to the way and will of God as revealed in the Scriptures, offer a gentle biblical corrective.

Yes, even something as simple as a yearly wall calendar can offer us a window into the world of our kids. And, that same calendar can provide teachable moments we can use to fulfill our calling to nurture our kids in the Lord. ★

Most Influential Teens of 2018

Source:

TIME Magazine

(10 youngest of the top 25 Most Influential Teens)

To see full list visit:

<http://time.com/5463721/most-influential-teens-2018/>



1. **Marley Dias**
2. **Rishab Jain**
3. **Marsai Martin**
4. **Millie Bobby Brown**
5. **Storm Reid**
6. **Thandiwe Abdullah**
7. **Bhad Bhabie**
8. **Greta Thunberg**
9. **NCT Dream (K-Pop Group)**
10. **Billie Eilish**



QUICK STATS

From 2013 to 2017, Syphilis cases increased by 76% and Gonorrhea cases increased by 65%.
(Centers for Disease Control)

1 in 5 teenagers don't have access to high-speed Internet at home that is fast enough to complete their required school homework.
(Pew Internet)

FROM THE NEWS:

STUDENTS NO LONGER READING

Smarphones, computers, iPads, and all other kinds of new technology are a good gift from God. Of course, as with all things in life, we need to use these things in ways that advance rather than inhibit our human flourishing. One of the documented downsides to living on the digital frontier is that fewer and fewer kids are reading books, and those who are, are reading fewer and fewer books. Research published in the journal, *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, says that the use of traditional media, such as books, magazines, and television, has dropped off with kids. Not surprisingly, the use of digital media and social media continues to increase. As of 2016, just 16% of twelfth graders reported reading a book or magazine almost every day. About a third of twelfth graders said they had not read a book or e-book for pleasure in the last year. We believe that readers are leaders. And, it is documented that reading develops our God-given brains. Are your kids reading?

TRENDS:

LAWNMOWER PARENTING

Every now and then someone comes up with a new term to describe a cultural phenomena. In recent years, we've heard experts who believe parents are way too involved in managing their kids' lives refer to things like over-parenting, helicopter parenting, and snow-plow parenting. Now, add to that list the term "lawnmower parent." A lawnmower parent is one who mows down all of their children's challenges, discomforts, and struggles in order to facilitate an easier life for their children. Critics rightly push back, saying that parents who repeatedly work to eliminate struggles are raising children who will be ill-equipped to face the inevitable difficulties that come with life. Jesus told his followers that "in this world you will have trouble." One of the best gifts we can give our kids is the opportunity to face difficulties while they are still under our watchful eyes. Let your kids clean up their own messes, suffer the consequences of their actions, and learn from their mistakes.



LATEST RESEARCH:

BENEFITS OF ATTENDING CHURCH

It's great when the research data points to realities and outcomes that we would expect and celebrate. Such is the case with new research findings published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*. It seems that some of the benefits of attending religious services and engaging in prayer are measurable. Compared to others, teenagers who attended religious services were 12% less likely to suffer from depression, 33% less likely to use illicit drugs, 18% more likely to report high levels of happiness, and 87% more likely to have high levels of forgiveness. Teens who prayed frequently were 30% less likely to start having sex at a young age, 40% less likely to have an STD, 38% more likely to volunteer in their community, and 47% more likely to have a sense of mission and purpose.

Our purpose in life is to know, glorify, and enjoy God forever. For the Christian, faith truly transforms our lives!

COLLEGE
TRANSITION
INITIATIVE

a resource of CPYU

www.CollegeTransitionInitiative.comCollege
Students and
Mental Health

by Walt Mueller



While campus health centers continue to treat physical illness and injury, a growing number of students are showing up seeking help with mental health issues. In fact, anxiety is now the #1 healthcare concern on college campuses across the United States. . . including all private, public, and Christian colleges.

The recent Healthy Minds Study analyzed data from more than 150,000 students on 196 college campuses. The results indicate that in 2007, 22 percent of college students were diagnosed with mental health issues. By 2017, that number had increased to 36 percent. Over the same time span, the percentage of students reporting suicidal thoughts almost doubled, from 6 percent to 11 percent. And finally, the number of students seeking treatment for mental health issues rose from 19 percent to 34 percent.

We encourage you to track with the college students you know and love. If you suspect or confirm an issue related to anxiety, stress, depression, or mental health, seek the help of a qualified Christian counselor.

New Podcast

Youth Culture Matters
is a long-format
podcast from CPYU
co-hosted by Walt Mueller
and Jason Soucinek.



Listen at
www.cpyu.org/podcast.

Be sure to check out
Episode 73 titled
“‘Eighth Grade’ Film: A
Youthworker Round Table
Discussion.”

FROM THE WORD

The book of Proverbs tells us that “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (1:7). Our great desire for our children must be that they come to know and fear the Lord in ways that lead to living lives marked by wisdom rather than foolishness. But that desire cannot be realized without the grace of God *and* our diligent effort to know and pass on that wisdom to our kids.

Many of us have taken the parenting approach promoted in the saying, “Christianity is better caught than taught.” Without a doubt, our example of wisdom lived out in front of and with our kids is a powerful teacher. But to simply provide a necessary example void of necessary words shortchanges our children and can derail our efforts at spiritual nurture.

**“LAY HOLD OF MY WORDS
WITH ALL YOUR HEART;
KEEP MY COMMANDS
AND YOU WILL LIVE.”
PROVERBS 4:4**

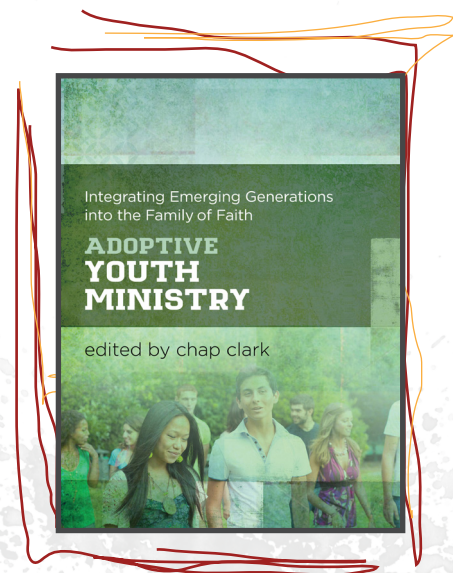
Proverbs 4:4 describes the oral passing on of the truths of the Christian faith from one generation to another. The source of this truth is God himself. Then, the writer of Proverbs tells his child that he is going to pass on to him what he has learned from his own father (4:1-3). Why is this father committed to teaching his own child? Because by embracing the truths of God’s Word and living out those truths our lives are marked by meaning, purpose, and flourishing.

This year, endeavor to know and live God’s Word more deeply, fully, and consistently in front of your kids. You will be passing on to them the legacy of life!

HELPFUL RESOURCE ←

Kids desperately need healthy, committed adults who can help them thrive in their faith and become active participants in the life of the church. This requires the efforts of the whole faith community. Chap Clark, one of the leading voices in youth ministry today, brings together twenty-four experts from a variety of denominations and traditions to offer a comprehensive introduction to adoptive youth ministry, a theologically driven, academically grounded, and practical youth ministry model. CPYU’s Walt Mueller provides a chapter on ‘Youth Ministry, Adoption, and Culture.’

Adoptive Youth Ministry shows readers how to integrate emerging generations into the family of faith, helping young adults become active participants in God’s redemptive community.



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