

Joining the Fight Against Poverty



"The greatest way to teach about poverty is to experience poverty."

One of the most important lessons you can teach your teen is to care for the poor and needy. The problem is that many people view the poor in a much different light than God does. Deuteronomy 15:11 says, "There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land." How do you teach this lesson to your teen? The greatest way to teach about poverty is to experience poverty. Most teens have seen poor people on the street or on a news program, however, most experience these scenes while in the air-conditioned car or on a comfortable sofa watching TV. Go and volunteer your time at a homeless shelter or go on the next short-term mission trip offered at your church, and TAKE your teen. Experiencing something like this with your teen will be life-changing for your whole family. Another way to teach your teen how to combat poverty on a local level is to make care packages of non-perishable food items and toiletries to give to the poor. This way you know you are meeting a need, and you know where your money is going. Teens also love to give to a specific need, name, and face. Organizations such as Compassion International (compassion.com) and World Vision (worldvision.com) allow your family to give support to a specific child. You learn a little about their family and what your money is doing to help this child with the daily necessities of life. While we are still on this earth, there will always be the poor. One of the best ways to teach your teen about the poor is to show them how to do something to help them. It teaches them to follow scripture as well as taking the focus off of themselves and putting it where it needs to be...on others. We must be proactive in creating a generation of givers.

There are many websites that help teens better understand poverty on a national and international level. Educate your teen today by visiting the following websites:

* Make Poverty History/ONE Campaign: 'Make Poverty History' and the ONE Campaign are both movements encompassed by the 'Global Call to Action Against Poverty' network of organizations. They are primarily aimed toward teenagers and young adults, and have the support of many celebrities, including Bono and Brad Pitt. Both campaigns work to increase awareness of global poverty. (makepovertyhistory.org)

* Habitat for Humanity CCYP: Habitat for Humanity's Campus Chapters and Youth Program allows teenagers to get involved in some of the home-construction projects that Habitat for Humanity is famous for around the world. (habitat.org/youthprograms)

* NetAid: NetAid's Student Center is a site with information on poverty issues that is geared toward kids, and offers ways you can get involved. The NetAid site also gives ideas for fundraisers, letter-writing campaigns, and much more. (netaid.org)

* Don't forget to find out what your church is doing and get involved. Working with your church family is a great way to learn first-hand about helping the poor.

Pulse

Here are some thoughts on poverty throughout the world.

How much influence do you think individuals in the U.S. have on:

64% - Poverty in the U.S.
48% - The war on terrorism
37% - The HIV/AIDS epidemic in other countries
28% - Poverty in other countries

(compassion.com)



Should more public funds go to helping the homeless?

81% - Yes
19% - No

(teenink.com)

The Parent POV (point of view)

Do you know what your teen thinks about helping the poor and needy? You might be very surprised to hear his/her answers on the importance of this social issue.

1. What is the first thing you think of when you think of a poor person? Why do you think that?
2. Have you ever helped a homeless person? If yes, what did you do? What was that person's response? If no, what is holding you back?
3. What responsibility do you think you have in helping the poor in the United States and around the world? Why do you think that?
4. What does God say about helping the poor? How do you think God wants us to give to the poor?



Focus on Prayer

Pray that:

1. God will help your family find a tangible way to meet the needs of the poor here in the United States and around the world.
2. Your teen will have an aware and thankful heart for ALL the many blessings they have and are yet to receive from the Lord.
3. Your family will not see someone in need as worthless or unlovable, but will see them as valuable and lovable.
4. God will show your family that it is your responsibility to meet the needs of the poor.

Verse of the month

"When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God." Leviticus 19:9-10

Leviticus was written to the Jews to set God's people apart from the world. He spoke about many personal, social, and relational issues, and, of course, He focused on taking care of the poor. We are a blessed nation and people whom God continues to allow to reap a harvest of this land. We should remind our teens and our family of this every day. But as we harvest, God gives specific instructions that we are not to keep all of His blessings for ourselves. The Jews were to leave the very edges of their field. Why? So that the poor could come and pick the grain and gather the grapes themselves. As parents, pray that God will help your teen truly understand that it is much better to give than it is to receive.



Did you know...

- * 1 billion children live in poverty (1 in 2 children in the world); 640 million live without adequate shelter, 400 million have no access to safe water, 270 million have no access to health services. (globalissues.org)
- * According to the Federal Register, the official poverty rate in the U.S. has increased for four consecutive years, from a 26-year low of 11.3% in 2000 to 12.7% in 2004. This means that 37 million people were below the official poverty thresholds in 2004. (wikipedia.com)
- * 20% of the population in the developed nations consume 86% of the world's goods. (globalissues.org)
- * Nearly 13 million children in the United States—18% of all children—live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level—\$20,650 a year for a family of four. (nccp.org)



Music alternative

Underoath, a six member post-hardcore/Screamo band, formed in 1998. Their music was much heavier in its beginning. Frequent member changes continued till the group became solid in 2004 and released "They're Only Chasing Safety" which sold about 350,000 copies. In 2006 "Define the Great Line" released to Gold Album status selling 500,000 units and debuting on Billboard 200 at #2 (the highest debut for a Christian album since 1997). Touring continued and they released 777 DVD in December of 2007 chronicling videos and tour footage. Underoath confirmed their being on the Warped Tour 2007 this July.
(underoath777.com/wikipedia.org)

trends

The hot trend for celebrities right now is designing clothes. Look and see how teens answered this question:

What celebrity designer is your favorite?

38% - Gwen Stefani for L.A.M.B.
26% - Kate Moss for Top Shop
22% - Lily Allen for New Look
14% - Madonna for H&M
(fashionclub.com)

musicspotlight



Albums:

"Lies of the Liars" - 5/2007

"Berth" - 2/2007

"In Love and Death" - 9/2004

Background: This quartet is from the quiet, peaceful town of Orem, Utah. Despite their very rough past including homelessness, poverty, and drug addiction, the guys continued to form The Used. After only playing about twenty shows, the group was signed to Reprise Records who produced their debut album in 2002. "The Used thrives on friction." This can be seen in their personalities and how the members interact with each other and it can be seen in their music as well. The group has been a part of such shows as Ozzfest, Vans Warped tour, and Linkin Park's Projekt Revolution tour. The Used's genre of music is Emo (emotional hardcore punk/rock), but is also classified as a fusion of Screamo and post-hardcore according to their own website. (sonicnet.com and theused.net)

What parents should know: The Used's most recent album, like some from its past, contains a parental advisory. It contains numerous foul language. The album has a very negative and dark feel which matches their image.

What the group has to say: Guitarist Quinn Allman says he puts his faith in music and says, "God is just a concept, but music is tangible." Q: What does the Bible say about faith and how does it differ from Allman's quote?



filmwatch

Want your teens watching these movies this summer?

TITLE	RATING	RED FLAGS	GENRE	STARRING
Transformers	PG-13	For sequences of intense violence and action	Action/adventure, Science fiction	Shia LaBeouf, Megan Fox, Josh Duhamel, Rachel Taylor
I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry	PG-13	For crude sexual content throughout, nudity, language, and drug references	Comedy	Adam Sandler, Kevin James, Jessica Biel, Ving Rhames
I Know Who Killed Me	R	For grisly violence including torture and disturbing gory images, and for sexuality, nudity, and language	Thriller	Lindsay Lohan, Julia Ormond, Neal McDonough, Brian Geraghty