

YOUTH CULTURE
HOT QUOTE

“I’m more of a hands-on learner, so learning through a screen isn’t really that helpful, and I don’t like talking over Zoom, so I don’t ask questions. Most of my interactions with professors are over email, so I’m not really building a relationship.”

College Sophomore Inayah Johnson, discussing the difficulties of online college education during the pandemic, [Time.com](https://www.time.com), September 10, 2020.



Parental Priority #1

WALT MUELLER, CPYU President



Every time I pass it with an out-of-town friend in the car, I point them in its direction and watch their eyes fill with wonder and awe. It sits just off the highway among farmers’ fields just a few miles from my house. Billed as the largest and most innovative sports complex in the country, it features over 700,000 square feet of indoor space and over 50 acres of outdoor fields. Not only does it serve our local community well, but people come from all over to participate in tournaments and championship events year-round.

Because it sits midway between our house and our church, I pass the complex twice every Sunday morning. It’s not at all unusual to see fields covered with young athletes, stands filled with parents, and parking lots filled with cars as early as 7:30am. In many ways, this fabulous facility has a dark side, as it serves to reveal the reality of what’s become most important, at least for the moment, in the lives of so many families.

While there are a multitude of worthwhile and good activities that parents are able to pursue with their kids, organized sports could very well be at the top of the list of those things that take up more and more of our time, our money, our energies, and our efforts. And when we add something to an already full calendar, it is necessary for us to subtract and sacrifice something else. In today’s world, that “something else” is oftentimes the very thing that we should *never* subtract – our time spent nurturing our souls in the Christian faith through worship, study, fellowship, prayer, and service.

Someone once said to me, “You tell me who or what you spend your time doing, and I’ll tell you who or what your god really is.” As a Christian, I found that question to serve as an incredibly annoying yet much-needed kick in the pants. With so much being funneled into youth sports these days, we have to take time to consider if our family sports involvement (or involvement in any other activity!) has moved beyond being a *good* thing, into becoming an *ultimate* thing. If it’s the latter, then we have allowed it to become an idol.

I increasingly hear youth workers lament the destructive role that the good gift of sport plays in the lives of far too many of their students. One frustrated youth worker recently shared this message from a mom: “I’m afraid that Dylan won’t be able to continue his involvement in church and youth group this coming year unless you change your meeting dates and times. Between his soccer and basketball commitments, he is tied up with practice and games during the weekend, and every weeknight except Tuesdays.” Dylan is not only developing skills in soccer and basketball, he’s also developing priorities and allegiances he will most likely hold for the rest of his life.

Parents, whatever you deem through words and example as most important will nurture your kids in a direction of a lifetime of commitment to that particular thing. As Christian parents, our unshakable priority needs to be to make time and space to see them seek first to live with Jesus Christ as their Savior and their Lord.★

Most Anticipated Video Games for Fall 2020



1. **Marvel's Avengers**
2. **Call of Duty Black Ops: Cold War**
3. **Cyberpunk 2077**
4. **Assassin's Creed: Valhalla**
5. **FIFA 21**
6. **NBA 2K21**
7. **Crash Bandicoot 4: It's About Time**
8. **Starwars: Squadrons**
9. **Planet Coaster: Console Edition**
10. **Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 1+2**

Multi-Platform Releases
Source:
Nielsen Games



QUICK STATS

Ex-pro soccer players are almost 3.5x more likely to die of dementia and 5x more likely to die from Parkinson's.

(The New England Journal of Medicine)

Bullying effects 1 in 5 high school students and 1 in 4 middle school students.

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

FROM THE NEWS:

KIDS AND FAKE NEWS

Trying to navigate the Covid-19 pandemic, current racial tensions, and the insane back-and-forth that's come with this election year, it has gotten difficult to know who or what to trust when it comes to engaging with the news. The term "Fake news" is one that we're familiar with as we try to navigate the times. A new study has found that where people go to get their news determines their susceptibility to believing misinformation. The research found that those who get their news from social media were more likely to believe and embrace falsehoods about Covid-19. While the study focused on fake news regarding the pandemic, it does shed light on the dangerous practice of going to social media and how that leads to the viral spreading of falsehoods. Twitter, Facebook, and other social media outlets should not be trusted, even though they can communicate truth. Teach your kids to go to reliable sources rather than sources of misinformation.

TRENDS:
THINSPO

The word “thinspo” is cutting a dangerous path through today’s youth culture. Thinspo is short for thin inspiration.

It’s a social media user movement offering up memes, quotes, pictures, and posts designed to encourage diet and weight loss. The movement is coming under fire for the ways in which it promotes warped and unhealthy body image standards, particularly for our girls. Experts are rightly warning that the thinspo movement is fueling disordered eating and body dysmorphia. One of many memes I viewed simply says, “Don’t ever stop trying. Because one day, you will be thin.” One 17 year-old in the thinspo movement posted a video on TikTok telling viewers that all she had consumed that day was a jug filled with ice water,

with the hashtag “what I eat in a day” (#whatieatinaday).

Parents, the pressure to be thin is strong. Peer influence is powerful. Be aware, and encourage your kids away from the dangers of worshipping the god of thinness.



LATEST RESEARCH:

SLOWING DOWN TO FIGHT ANXIETY

With our teens already dealing with high levels of anxiety, you would have thought that the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic would only increase their level of anxiety. Consequently, over the last several months mental health experts have warned those who care about

kids to pay special attention to their mental and emotional health. But a new study out of Britain is reporting that among 13-14 year-olds, the level of their anxiety actually dropped during the pandemic lockdown. As you can imagine, this has come as a big surprise. Experts suspect that the move away from days spent in school with the normal busyness and pressures of school life, has occasioned the decrease. Some parents are reporting that the drop in their

child’s stress levels is unbelievable. The reality is that our push for our kids to be heavily involved in a variety of activities and to shine in each might be too much for them to handle. One coronavirus lesson we need to heed is to slow the pace of life for our kids.

COLLEGE
TRANSITION
INITIATIVE

a resource of CPYU



www.CollegeTransitionInitiative.com

What Will Your
Child Be When
They Grow Up?

by Walt Mueller



Parents, what will your children be choosing as a career when they grow up? I remember wondering that about each of my four kids from the moment they were born. You have probably done the same. A new survey found that 75% of today’s parents say they already know what their child will be when they grow up. At the top of the list are careers in the science, technology, and engineering fields. After that comes careers in healthcare, and jobs in the food industry. It seems that these choices have been made largely due to trends in the job market, along with a desire for children to have a high-paying career.

While it would be easy for Christian parents to pursue these same goals for our kids, there is a better way. Our goal should be to first and foremost encourage our kids to discover and develop their unique God-given gifts and abilities. Monetary success should not be a prime motivator. And then, we must teach them that whatever they do, they should do it to the glory of God.

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 114 titled "Youth Culture Trends of Summer 2020" a Youthworker Round Table Discussion

FROM THE WORD

These two little words uttered by Jesus on who-knows-how-many occasions are recorded 22 times in the Gospels. They sit at the core of what it means to find one's created purpose in life by entering into a relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ. Ultimately, we all must respond in one way or another to this invitation.

In Matthew 4:19, we learn that when Jesus issued this command to Peter, Andrew, James, and John, they *immediately* left all that they were doing to follow Jesus. In Mark 10:21, the response of the rich young ruler was the exact opposite. We read that he was "disheartened" by this command which warrants a change of allegiance. . . and "he went away sorrowful."

"FOLLOW ME."

MATTHEW 4:19,

MARK 10:21

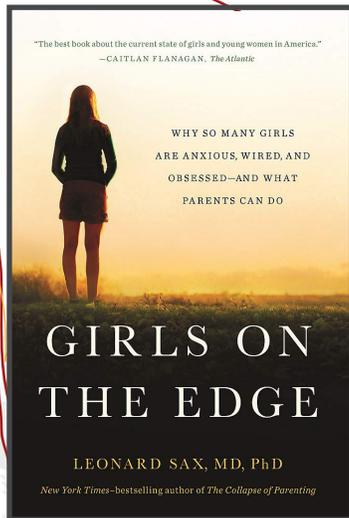
As parents, we are always leading our kids into following someone or something. The Apostle Paul reminds us that we are to exercise intentionality by bringing our children up "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Help your children to see that answering *immediately* in the affirmative to Jesus' command is life-giving and leads to human flourishing. And, tell them the sad and sorrowful story of the man who wasn't willing to give away anything in order to follow Jesus.

HELPFUL RESOURCE ←

A parenting expert reveals the four biggest threats to girls' psychological growth and explains how parents can help their daughters develop a healthy sense of self.

In *Girls on the Edge: Why So Many Girls Are Anxious, Wired, And Obsessed - And What Parents Can Do*, psychologist and physician Leonard Sax argues that many girls today have a brittle sense of self—they may look confident and strong on the outside, but they're fragile within. Sax offers the tools we need to help them become independent and confident women, and provides parents with practical tips on everything from helping their daughter limit her time on social media, to choosing a sport, to nurturing her spirit through female-centered activities.

This updated version takes a look at new issues confronting girls today, including the pressure to perform on social media, why girls tend to be fearful and risk-averse, and more. Compelling and inspiring, *Girls on the Edge* points the way to a new future for today's girls and young women.



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