

Tough Conversations, Gospel Truth

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Which of these topics do kids need a biblical worldview for?

- Bullying
- Loneliness
- Social media
- Racial inequality
- Depression
- Gender identity
- School shootings
- Self-harm
- All of the above

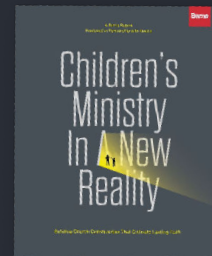
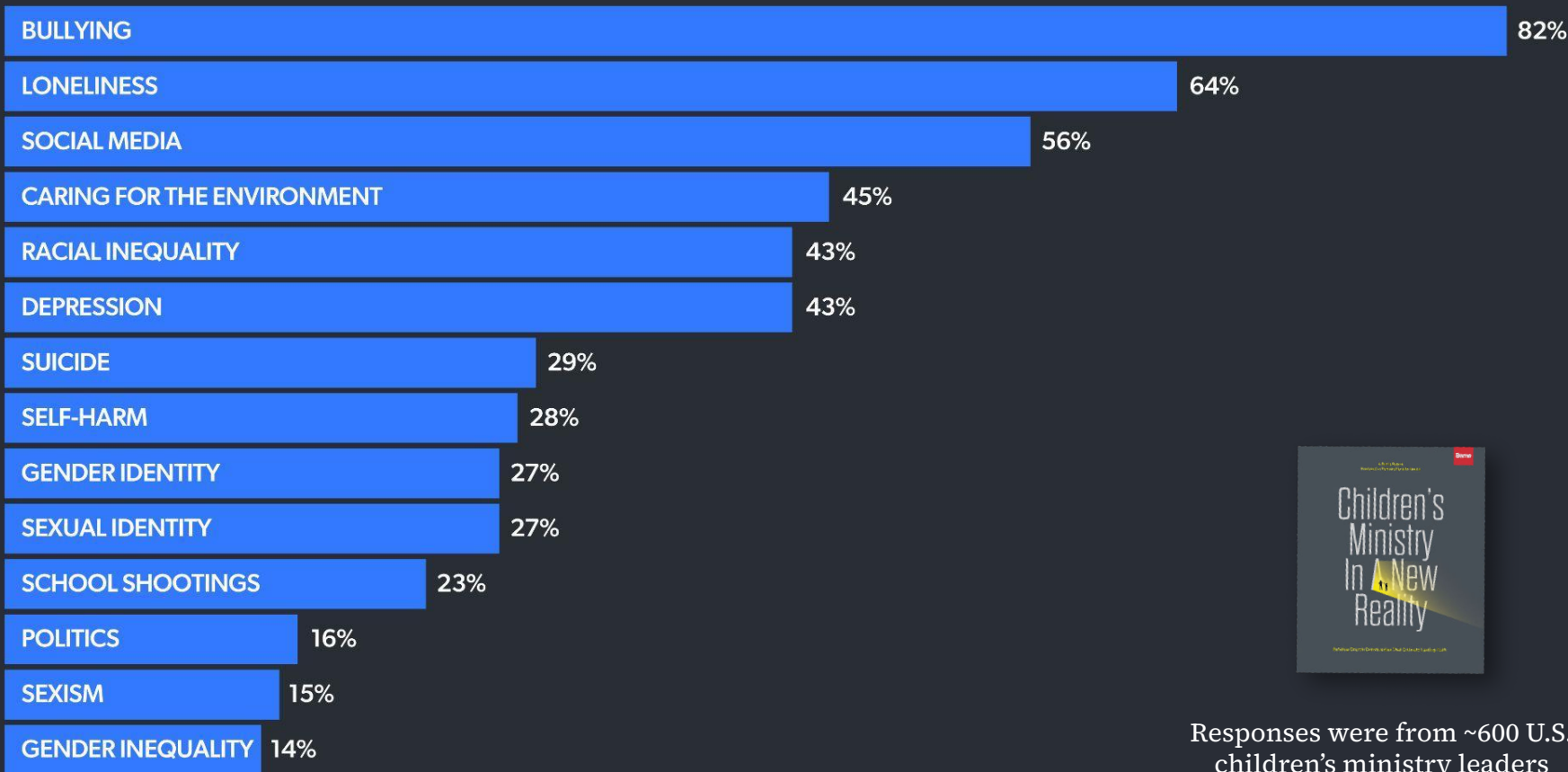
Should Children's Ministry address current events, social topics, mental health or potentially difficult subjects?



Which of these topics would be difficult to discuss?

- Bullying
- Loneliness
- Social media
- Racial inequality
- Depression
- Gender identity
- School shootings
- Self-harm
- All of the above

Topics Children's Ministry Leaders address:



Responses were from ~600 U.S.
children's ministry leaders

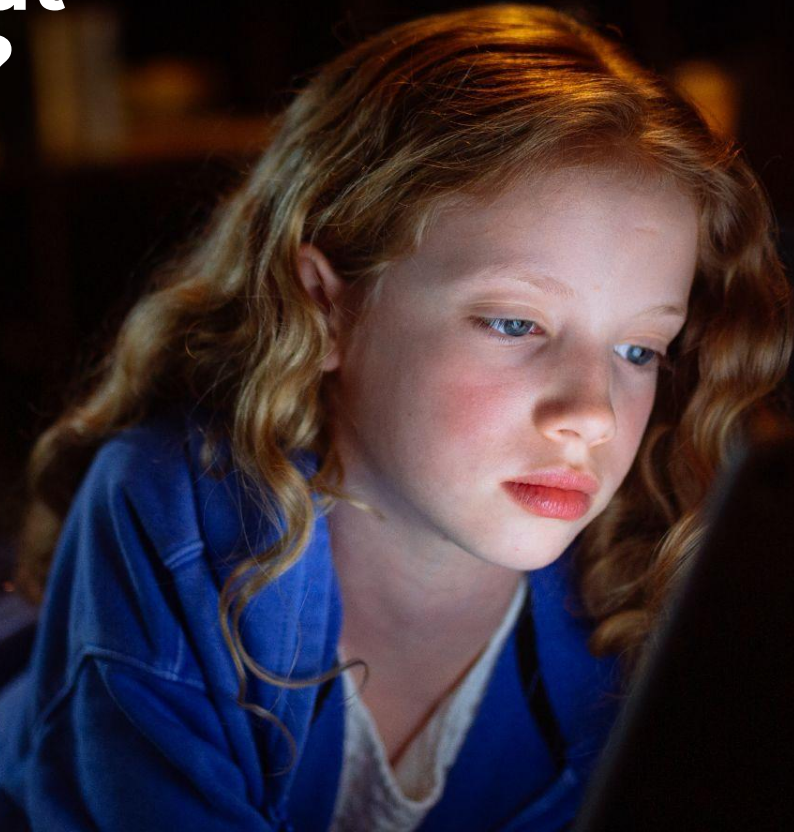
A Barna study shows people serving in children's ministry are having age-appropriate conversations about tough topics, but that number decreases the more difficult the topic is.

Why do we avoid tough topics?

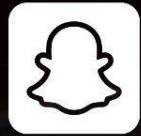
Why do we avoid tough topics?

- Uncomfortable with the subjects
- Fear of what kids might say
- Worried that parents might get mad
- Unsure of our knowledge or have no knowledge

**Who is discipling
our kids about
these topics?**



**Who is disciplining
our kids about
these topics?**



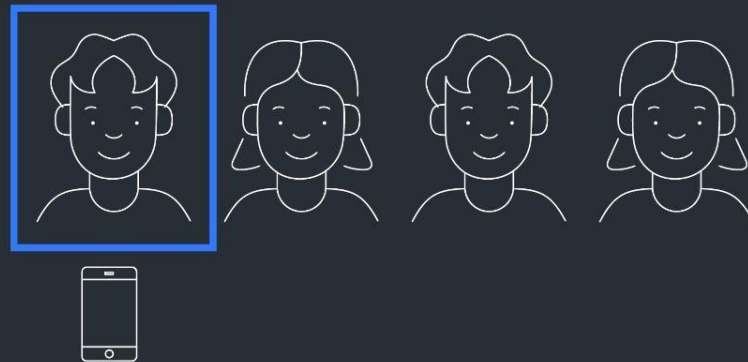
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By 2 years old, 40% of children have their own tablet. By 4 years old, more than half (58%) do.



By 8 years old, nearly 1 in 4 kids have their own cell phone.

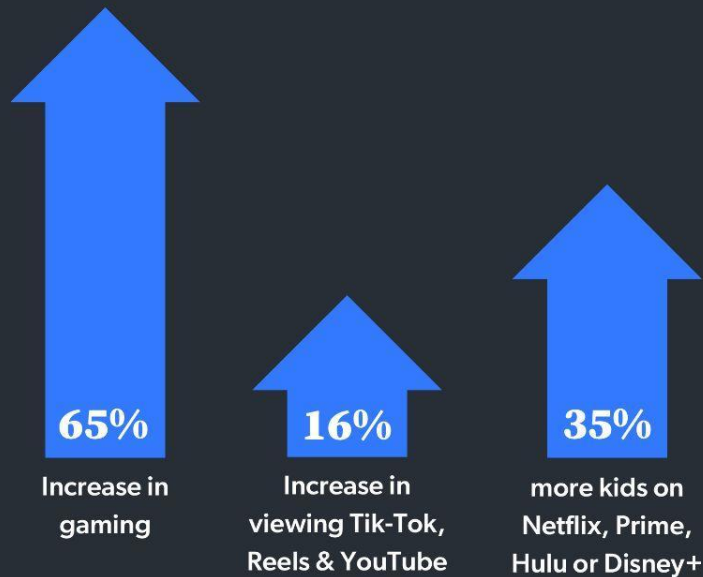


What does that look like for kids aged 2–8?

They spend about 2.5
hours per day on devices.



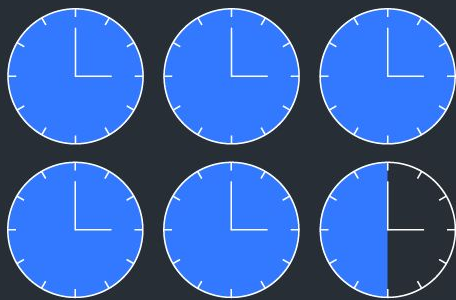
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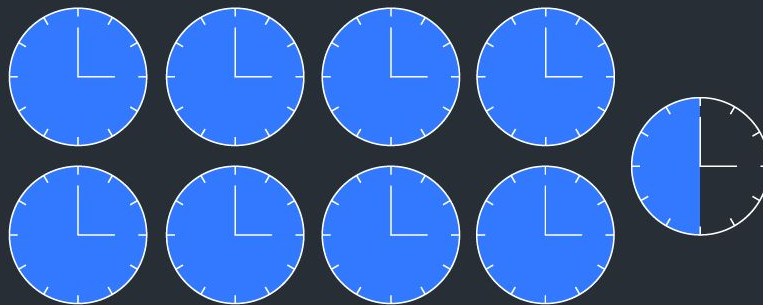
From 2025 Common Sense Census: Media Use by Kids Zero to Eight

What does that mean for tweens & teens?

Tweens are on screens
~5.5 hours per day



Teens are on screens
~8.5 hours per day



What does that mean for tweens & teens?

Teens say they wouldn't want to live without:



YouTube



Snapchat



TikTok



Instagram

Parents are concerned, and we should be, too.

75% – 80% of parents surveyed are concerned about children's use of screens and how it is affecting their mental health.



**“When the world is screaming
about something and the
church is silent, then a whole
generation only hears one
worldview. If the Bible speaks,
the church must speak.”**

-Shane Pruitt

*National Next Gen Director for the
North American Mission Board*



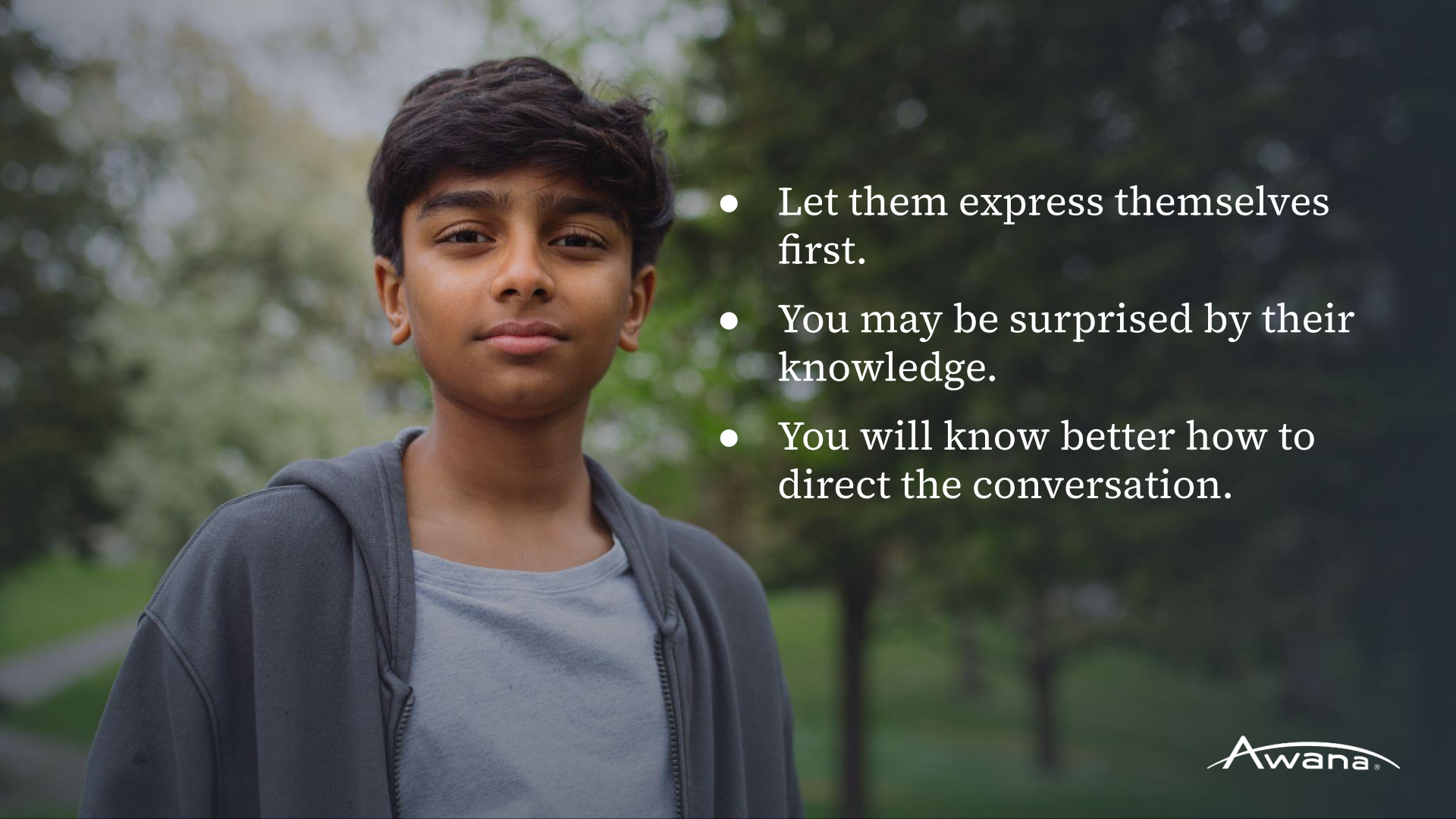
**So, HOW do we
talk to kids about
tough topics?**



1. Ask kids what they have heard about the topic and listen to what they say.

***Let every person be
quick to hear, slow to
speak, slow to anger.***

(James 1:19)

- 
- Let them express themselves first.
 - You may be surprised by their knowledge.
 - You will know better how to direct the conversation.



2. Ask kids what they think God
has to say about the topic.

***Trust in the LORD with all your
heart, and do not lean on
your own understanding.***

(Proverbs 3:5)



- Teach kids to use their biblical knowledge and apply it to the real world.
- Help kids find answers in God's Word.
- Gently correct wrong theology.



3. Share biblical truth in an age-appropriate manner.

***All Scripture is breathed out
by God and profitable for
teaching, for reproof, for
correction, and for training
in righteousness.***

(2 Timothy 3:16)

- Stick to biblical truth, not politics or opinion.
- Avoid judgement.
- Focus on the biblical teaching more than describing the worldly concept.
- It's okay to say, "Let's revisit this next week."



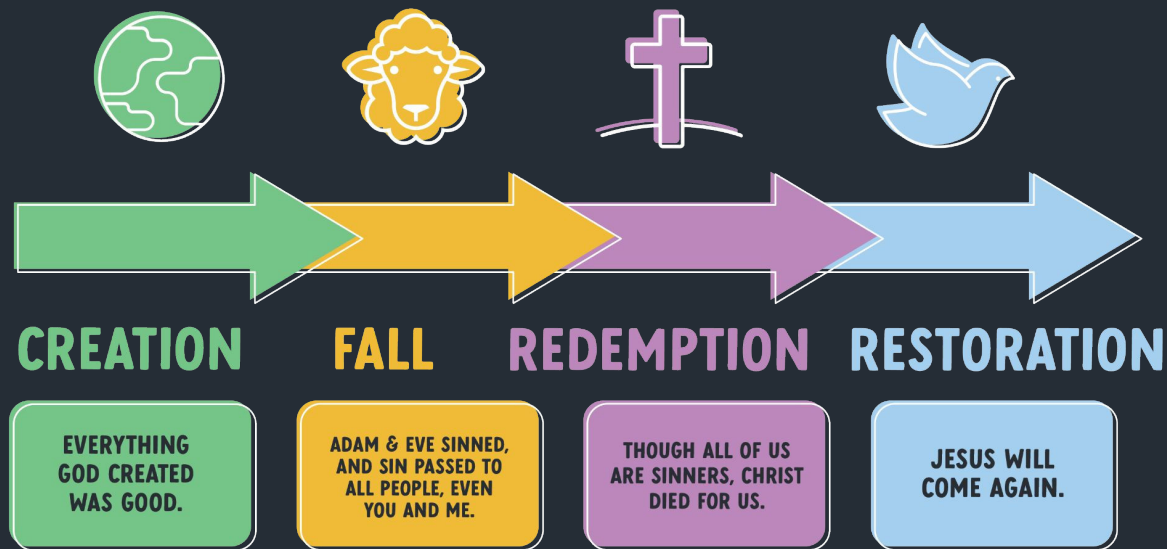
Helpful Resources

- *10 Questions Every Teen Should Ask and Answer About Christianity*, by Rebecca McLaughlin
- *Children's Ministry in a New Reality*, from Barna, in partnership with Awana
- **The Child Discipleship Podcast**, available on Amazon Music, Apple Podcasts, PodBean, Spotify, TuneIn and others.



4. Always point to Jesus.

God's Big Story



- Every “tough topic” conversation is a Gospel opportunity.
- God didn’t create the world to be this way. The world is broken because of sin. Jesus came to redeem us, and one day He will restore all things.

***“You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart and with all your
soul and with all your mind. This is
the great and first commandment.”***

(Matthew 22:37–38)



5. Partner with parents on tough topics.

***“You shall teach them
diligently to your
children, and shall
talk of them when you
sit in your house.”***

(Deuteronomy 6:7)

- Defer to parents when it's not an age-appropriate conversation.
- Defer to parents when it affects common family traditions.
- Keep parents informed about topics of conversation.
- Let parents know about red flags.



Tough Topics:

- Bullying
- Loneliness
- Social media
- Racial inequality
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We don't do this alone.

We must invite the Holy Spirit
to guide and lead us, and the
child we are working with, to
the truth of God's Word.

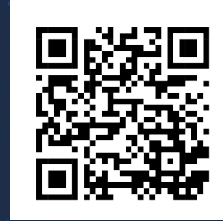
“When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come.”

(John 16:13)

Child Discipleship Resources for Churches and Parents



ChildDiscipleship.com



**Key References
and Data Source:**

CommonSenseMedia.org/Research