



CHANNEL SURFIN'

1. List five television shows below, from your most favorite to your least favorite.
2. If you could spend a day with any TV celebrity, who would you choose? Why?

3. Circle the one that applies to you.

I watch—

- a. way too much television.
- b. an okay amount of television.
- c. hardly any television.
- d. no television.

If a friend calls while I'm watching my favorite show, I—

- a. call back after the program.
- b. talk while watching the show.
- c. turn the TV off and talk.
- d. have my mom or dad tell them I'm busy.

If our TV broke, I would—

- a. try to talk my parents into buying another one ASAP.
- b. find other ways to occupy my time.
- c. go to a friend's house to watch TV.
- d. go crazy!

4. Check either **Yup, that's me** or **Nope, that's not me** for each statement below.

- | | Yup, that's me | Nope, that's not me |
|--|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. I watch over 20 hours of television a week. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. I watch TV even though I should be doing something else, like homework. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. I watch shows I know aren't good for me or my parents don't like. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Do the following Bible verses apply to watching TV? Why or why not?

Joshua 14:1-21

1 Corinthians 10:31

Acts 10:4

Colossians 3:1-2

CHANNEL SURFIN' [t e l e v i s i o n]

THIS WEEK

Television, the tube, the telly (to use British slang), the TV. Call it what you will, but the TV rules the American household. The average person watches hours of television every week. Now, with cable there's a channel for nearly everyone with any interest—from sports lovers to rap music fans. The TV is the life of U.S. popular culture—telling people what they need or don't need, what they should eat, drink, or where, and how they should look, act, and behave.

This TalkSheet raises important questions for Christians. You can't tell your kids to turn the TV off altogether, but you can teach them good viewing skills. The purpose of this session is to talk about TV and teach them how to evaluate what they watch.

OPENER

On a large piece of newsprint or whiteboard, draw a blank television schedule for the week, writing only the days, certain channels, and certain evening times (such as Fox Network, Monday, 7:00 p.m. or NBC, Tuesday, 8:00 p.m.). Then ask the kids to guess or tell you what shows air at those specific times. You'll be surprised how much they know! Have the correct answers available in order to check their responses. For information on show times in your area check out Gist TV (www.gist.com/tv/) or www.askjeeves.com, then type in the keywords, "television shows."

Want to take it further? Ask your group to rank the shows as good, bad, or questionable on a scale of 1-10, with stars, or however you want to. Talk about the different kinds of shows and what age groups they think each show is meant for. Then, discuss how each show portrays people of different ages—especially teenagers, parents, and religion.

THE DISCUSSION, BY THE NUMBERS

1. Your group will have a variety of favorite shows. What do they like about them and why did they chose one over another?
2. Ask the group to share their favorite television personalities and why they'd want to spend a day with that person. What do they like about this person and why?
3. What are the TV watching habits of your group? You'll find that most of their evenings revolve around the TV—even if there's nothing really good on.
4. This activity allows your kids to evaluate their viewing habits. Challenge them to evaluate their TV watching habits and discuss how the TV

impacts their lives. Listen to them carefully and save your opinions until the end, if necessary.

5. Ask the kids to share the verses that apply to TV and ask how they apply. Discuss with them how TV be used to glorify God? How do they think Christians should view certain shows? What Christian influences or values to they see in certain programs, if any?

THE CLOSE

TV is entertainment. Billions of dollars are spend on programming every week. But most of what's on TV isn't real—the shows offer an escape from reality. Some youth don't understand that they're watching fiction—shows with beautiful (sometimes perfect) people, numerous special effects, and unrealistic plots.

Brainstorm and make a list of the values that Christians should look for in TV shows. What should Christians keep in mind when watching TV? How do they think saturating their minds with TV shows affects the way they act, talk, and live? How do they think advertisements affect them and what can they do about that as Christians? Challenge them to limit their TV watching and brainstorm other activities they can do to fill the time.

MORE

- What and when are they watching? Ask your kids to keep journal of their weekly TV watching and then bring it in for discussion. Discuss the shows they watched and the amount of time spend watching it compared to the other stuff they did, such as homework, playing sports, eating, talking on the phone, and sleeping.
- And while they're watching the shows, have them pay close attention to the advertisements. What was the ad was telling them? Make a list of all their favorite ads and why the ad appealed to them. Explain that the average 1/2 hour TV show has more than 10 minutes of advertisements—how does that affect the way people think about and spend money?