

# Protecting Our Kids

✖ If there is a teenager in your home, you see something every day that others may miss: The battle for their hearts is real and the battle is here. The culture's impact even on Christian homes is undeniable.

The questions screaming in a parent's mind are: "What in the world do I do? How can I protect, help and arm my kids?"

During the last few years, you may have heard other Christian leaders talking about the battle for this young generation. Now let's talk about some specific tools you can use to win the war for your children.

- **Know all the media that is influencing your kids.** The world is out to get our kids' cash, and it will break all the moral standards it can to do it. Emerging technology can easily submerge kids in images and lyrics that would shock you. The distrust should not be placed on our kids, but rather in the world. It's time to draw the battle lines.

As parents, we must jump between media influence and our kids. Know the CDs they listen to and the songs on their iPods. Create a system where you check their music regularly and compare the lyrics to the Bible. Also, consider the Internet sites they visit. Make sure that you know the address of their MySpace blog or other blogs and know the "friends" they connect with online.

- **Find mentors who can speak into your child's life.** When we talk about honoring parents at our events, teens react as if they have never heard that before! Even though moms and dads have taught their children what is right a million times, kids can hear it in a fresh and different way when it comes from someone else. They need to be surrounded by people who can connect with them in different ways than you can.

- **Know all their friends.** The impact of peer pressure is undeniable. As parents, we need to help them find the right friends. Plug them into a youth group that is full of on-fire people; don't just deposit them in a church room where cynical kids hang out.

Some parents whom my wife, Katie, and I respect told us once that the biggest mistake they ever made was letting their kids sleep over at other people's houses. Since then, to protect our kids, we seldom let them spend the night with friends. You never know what they are learning while they are away.

The only families we allow our children to spend the night with are those we undeniably know and trust. Spend time with your kids and their friends so that you are well-connected with their social world.

And be wary of elusive friends. You should be aware of every influence. Remember, you are still the parent and you have the authority to decide who is in their peer group.

- **Engage their hearts.** Make sure that you are connected with your kids at the heart level. When I notice that my kids are listening more to others than to me, I spend more time with them. For example, I take my daughters on regular dates. Know who is influencing your children; keep a "heart monitor" on them.

- **Remember kids who don't have Christian parents.** Get involved in their friends' lives or in a local youth ministry. Volunteer your time, love and money. You can connect with others who have a passion to reach young people at , and you can find resources such as video clips and sermon outlines to help you battle for the teenagers in your area.

It is imperative that you get involved. Together, we can reach this generation.

**Ron Luce** *founded Teen Mania in 1986. He and his wife, Katie,*

have seen  
more than 2 million youth attend events they host called  
Acquire the  
Fire, and they have sent more than 50,000 teens across the  
globe on  
mission trips. Ron and Katie live in Garden Valley, Texas,  
with their  
three children: Hannah, Charity and Cameron.