

**Youth Culture Lesson**  
**Finding Teachable Moments in Culture**  
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**Common Scents**

What Would You Give Up for Your Phone?

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**What Happened:**

We all know technology is increasingly important in today's world. Without cell phones, computers or the Internet, much of what we do at work, in school and with our friends would screech to a halt.

Still, some might be a little surprised about how important tech tools are to today's youth.

Researchers recently asked more than 7,000 teens and young adults what stuff in their lives they'd keep and what they'd give up if they had to do so. These researchers gave them a list of things—their car, cosmetics, passport and phone, among other items—and asked the youth if they could only keep two of them which ones would they keep.

More than half of 16- to 22-year-olds—53 percent—said they'd rather lose their sense of smell than their favorite piece of tech (normally their cell phone or laptop computer).

Because the sense of smell is a big part of our sense of taste, these respondents were giving up two senses for one phone; but to the folks at McCann, the results passed the smell test.

“Perhaps it's not all that surprising when you consider technology represents all the friends you could ever want, all the knowledge you will ever need and all the entertainment you could desire,” researchers wrote in the study. “For young people, technology is more than a useful tool or an enabler. It is truly their fifth sense.”

**Talk About It:**

How important is your tech-based connectivity—your cell phone, computer, etc.—to you? If you lost it, how would it affect you? How would your life change? Do you think your life would be much worse? Might it be better?

Recently, a 17-year-old boy in China allegedly sold one of his kidneys so he could buy an iPad 2. Most of us probably consider this a little extreme, but lots of us would give up something to stay connected with our friends and family via our smartphones or computers. What would you give up? Something little? Something big? Your sense of smell?

We all know there are some scents we probably wouldn't miss all that much. Scientists tell us our sense of smell is deeply tied to our emotions and memories. What are your favorite smells? Bread baking? The smell of the air after a rain? Are there scents that make you happy or nostalgic?

In biblical times, the sense of smell was pretty important. Sacrifices were considered pleasing to God because of their fragrance, and many of the most valuable things of the age—such as frankincense and myrrh—were valued for their scent.

Do you think those who lived then had a greater appreciation for the way things smelled? Why?

Do you think we're too dependent on technology for too much these days? Do you think we're getting so involved with our tech toys that we forget to smell the roses, so to speak? Or are we just living life differently than our parents and grandparents did? Is all our technology making our lives better?

**What the Bible Says:**

“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Take fragrant spices—gum, resin, onycha and galbanum—and pure frankincense, all in equal amounts, and make a fragrant blend of incense, the work of a perfumer...It shall be most holy to you. Do not make any incense with this formula for yourselves; consider it holy to the Lord’” (Ex. 30:34-37).

“They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves...for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him” (2 Pet. 2:19).

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows” (James 1:17).