Youth Culture Lesson: Finding Teachable Moments in Culture
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Who Do You Trust? Exchanging Passwords Can Be a Dangerous Way to Show It

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Posted: Jan. 23, 2012

What Happened:
Tiffany Carandang had been with her boyfriend for months. They loved each other and trusted each other completely. So it was only natural when they took the next natural step in their relationship: They exchanged Facebook passwords.

"It's a sign of trust," Tiffany, a senior in high school, told *The New York Times.* "I have nothing to hide from him, and he has nothing to hide from me."

Sharing passwords to social networks or e-mail accounts is relatively common among serious teen couples these days. For them, the exchange is about trust and commitment. Sam Biddle, who writes for the website Gizmodo, calls the practice (in the words of the *Times*) the "linchpin of intimacy in the 21st century."

Just as having sex outside of marriage, sharing passwords comes with its own share of dangers. For one, some teens feel unduly pressured to share—much as they might be pressured to sleep with someone.

"The response is the same: If we're in a relationship, you have to give me anything," says author Rosalind Wiseman.

Then there's always the risk that if the relationship goes awry, a spurned boyfriend or girlfriend might abuse his or her password privileges—posting secrets or slander on Facebook pages or playing havoc with someone's e-mail account.

"I've known plenty of couples who have shared passwords, and not a single one has not regretted it," Biddle says.

It's not just couples exchanging passwords. Friends sometimes swap them, too. The more folks who know someone's password, the greater likelihood there will be for it to be misused.

Talk About It:
Have you exchanged passwords with anyone? Who? A boyfriend or girlfriend? Another friend? Why? Have you ever felt pressured to swap passwords? Have you ever regretted giving your password to somebody?

Some parents, when they let their kids sign up for a social networking account, often ask them for their passwords. Have your parents done that? Are you comfortable with them

having it? Do you feel that it's an invasion of privacy? Would you do the same with your kids?

How big a deal is it to exchange passwords? How much trust would you need to have in a person to do so?

Most experts advise kids and teens never to give out their passwords to anyone other than their parents, but some teens never would anyway, not because they don't trust their friends or significant others, but because they like to draw some boundaries and keep some areas of their lives private.

How important is privacy to you? Do you think regardless of how much you love or trust someone you still should have some parts of your life that are just yours?

What the Bible Says:
"Trust and privacy aren't just big issues in our relationships here on earth. They're critical when we're talking about our relationship with God, too. He is the only One we can fully trust: I will put my trust in Him" (Heb. 2:13).

"And no password will keep our innermost thoughts or secret deeds from Him: His eyes are on the ways of men; He sees their every step. There is no dark place, no deep shadow" (Job 34:22).