

Youth Culture Lesson
Finding Teachable Moments in Culture
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Growing Maturity

Setting a Good Example...for Your Parents

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“Don’t trust anyone over 30.” That’s what Baby Boomers said in the 1960s, referring to the straight-laced generation that came before. Now some researchers say there’s a different generation gap at play—that your generation is in some ways more mature than that of your parents.

“Adolescence traditionally is viewed as a time of hedonism, risk taking, iconoclasm and a refusal to ‘settle down,’” writes William Higham of Adweek.com. “The times, they are a changing—and not the way Dylan described.”

According to Higham, teens worry more about their futures than their parents or even grandparents did. They tend to be more conservative politically and socially, as well as place a high value on being “financially secure.” In a recent poll, more than half of teens said that they wanted to live “by high moral standards”; about 75 percent said that their families were the most important things in their lives.

About half of teens say they want to remain virgins for as long as possible. Government studies also show that in the last six years illicit drug use among teens has fallen 25 percent; drinking and smoking also are declining.

By contrast, illegal drug use among folks over the age of 50 has shot up by 70 percent since 2002, and marijuana is abused more often among those 50-plus than any other age group. Oh, and another aside: The average age of a motorcyclist is now 47 years old.

Talk About It:

What does maturity mean to you? What do mature people do? What *don't* they do?

Do you think you’re fairly mature? What do you like to do? What do you worry about?

How do you compare to your parents in terms of maturity? Do you sometimes feel as if you’re more responsible than they are? When? Do they ever tell stories about what they did when they were your age?

What the Bible Says:

“I am young in years, and you are old; that is why I was fearful, not daring to tell you what I know. I thought, ‘Age should speak; advanced years should teach wisdom. But it

is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty that gives him understanding. It is not only the old who are wise, not only the aged who understand what is right” (Job 32:6-9).

“I have more understanding than the elders for I obey your precepts. I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey your word. I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me. How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth. I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path” (Ps. 119:100-104).