

Youth Culture Lesson
Finding Teachable Moments in Culture
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Scary Cells

Driving While Talking, Texting Is Dangerous

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What Happened:

Christopher Hill, 20, was driving home Sept. 3 when he saw a piece of furniture he thought one of his neighbors would like. He grabbed his cell phone, and as he was driving through an intersection dialed to make the call.

He didn't notice the light had already turned red, and Hill slammed into a small SUV carrying 45-year-old Linda Doyle. She was pronounced dead shortly thereafter.

Statistically, drivers using a cell phone – whether talking or texting – are four times more likely than the average driver to cause an accident. It's as dangerous as driving while having a blood alcohol content of .08 – enough to be considered intoxicated in most states.

According to a 2003 study from Harvard University, cell phones cause 2,600 auto-related deaths annually – a rate that likely has gone up along with the rate of cell phone usage. Experts say young, inexperienced drivers particularly are prone to using cell phones while driving.

In some states, it's a crime for younger drivers to use cell phones in the car. According to *The New York Times*, 21 states ban novice drivers from talking on the phone while driving; and 24 ban texting while driving.

A Question for Youth Workers:

How do you handle cell phones in your group?

In many classroom settings, teachers insist on a “phones-free” environment so students are better able to focus on the class. Do you do anything similar to this in your meetings with kids? What about your church or organization? What are its policies on phones in worship services or group meetings? Maybe you need to address this issue with your group.

Talk About It:

Do you drive? Do any of your friends? Do you (or they) talk or text while driving?

Do you think it's a good idea to ban talking on the phone or texting while driving? Are there other things that are equally distracting? What's the weirdest thing you've seen someone do behind the wheel?

If you're riding in a car and the driver is doing something dangerous, do you tell him or her to stop? How?

What the Bible Says:

“For by wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory” (Prov. 24:6).

“Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold is a wise reprover to a listening ear” (Prov. 25:12).

“Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy” (Prov. 27:5-6).