

**Youth Culture Lesson**  
**Finding Teachable Moments in Culture**  
**From *YouthWorker Journal* and YouthWorker.com**

**Prom Pressure:** How Far Would You Go to Make It a Night to Remember?

By Paul Asay

**What Happened:**

Want to take Taylor Swift to prom? How about Taylor Lautner? Better ask soon. As it turns out, celebrities are being deluged by high schoolers asking them out to their big dance.

Swift was flattered when 18-year-old Kevin McGuire asked the country star to prom. While she rejected the invite, according to *USA Today*, she instead gave the cancer-battling teen tickets to the Academy of Country Music Awards. When illness prevented McGuire from attending, she tweeted, “I’ll make it up to you, Kevin!”

She’s far from the only celeb being asked out on a date. Georgetta Wuo asked NBA star Ricky Rubio to the big dance over YouTube (her video got more than 84,000 hits). Brooke Dutridge is petitioning with “American Idol” contestant Scotty McCreery through a Facebook page (with 1,700 fans). Leon Purvis wants to take Justin Bieber to prom “just as a bro.” His YouTube vid has snagged more than 139,000 hits, and while Bieber has yet to respond, Purvis says, “Never say never.”

The truth is, most prom-going teens feel pressure to make the night something to remember. According to *USA Today*, teens are expected to spend an average of \$1,087 on prom this year—up from \$807 the year before. That’s in a still sour economy.

Most spend that money on limos and lavish dinners and spectacular dresses. Many teens, particularly teen girls, see prom as their “red-carpet moment”—to feel like a rich and famous celebrity. Some also spend it on hotel rooms, where teens gather with their friends afterward.

There can be another kind of pressure, too. It’s said that many teens lose their virginity to their prom-night dates—again in an effort to make the night all the more memorable.

**Talk About It:**

Have you ever been to prom? Are you going to prom this year? What would the “perfect” prom look like for you?

Is there pressure to make prom night memorable? Why is it such a big deal? What’s the craziest thing you’ve heard of someone doing on prom night?

Do you think there’s pressure to have sex on prom night? More pressure than usual to drink or use drugs? Have you or would you worry about being asked to do something

you're not comfortable doing? What's the best way of getting out of an uncomfortable situation at prom?

Would your parents worry about you going to prom? Do they have reason to worry? Do they set rules for the big night? Are there ways you could help make them feel a little more comfortable with prom?

**What the Bible Says:**

The Bible doesn't have much to say about how to behave on your prom night, but it does talk about oversized expectations, peer pressure and staying true to yourself. Here are a few verses.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139:23-24).

“Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you. Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse, who leave the straight paths to walk in dark ways, who delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil” (Prov. 2:11-15).

“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life” (Rom. 6:12-13).