

Youth Culture Lesson
Finding Teachable Moments in Culture
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Youth and the Recession
Painful Lessons

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What's Happening:

America is in the midst of a recession, and few have escaped its effects. Unemployment continues to climb. Spending continues to fall. Families continue to cut back, and youth are far from exempt.

When family members are laid off or are forced to move, teens suffer as much stress as their parents. They get angry and scared and sometimes cry. Some just keep it bottled up inside.

“You can see it in their eyes,” California math teacher Nathan Robinson told CBS News. “They’re thinking about something else, and it has nothing to do with algebra.”

Many teens are changing their own spending habits, staying away from expensive brands and shopping at thrift stores to save cash.

“Labels are becoming less and less of a priority for people throughout my school,” 17-year-old Chelsea Orcutt told *The New York Times*.

Teens are thinking creatively about summer employment, too. With more than 20 percent of youth unemployed, many teens are starting their own businesses. Some are becoming wildly successful.

Jasmine Lawrence, 17, started a body-care company, Eden BodyWorks, with savings from her allowance. The company now sells between \$700,000 and \$740,000 worth of product annually.

Some believe the recession may be a good thing for teens, teaching them the importance of saving more and spending wisely.

“Can it be that we are now being forced to teach our children a lesson we never fully learned ourselves?” writes Lisa Earle McLeod for the *Huffington Post*. “For

every teen having to cut back on designer duds, there are parents who are having to learn life isn't dependent on cool cars and granite counter tops."

Talk About It:

Has your family been affected by the recession?

Has the recession affected other people you know?

Has the recession affected you?

How are you helping your parents cope? How are you helping others?

How have your spending habits changed?

Are you eating out less? Going to fewer movies? Buying things you need on sale or used?

Have you been doing more activities that are free or cheap instead of costly activities, such as movies and restaurant meals? Have these been enjoyable?

Do we have a responsibility to help people in our church or community who are being hurt by the recession?

If so, what are some things you and your group can do to help others who have been impacted by the recession?

What the Bible Says:

"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality" (Rom. 12:12-13).

"Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed" (1 Pet. 4:12-13).

"But the needy will not always be forgotten nor the hope of the afflicted ever perish" (Ps. 9:18).

“The poorest of the poor will find pasture and the needy will lie down in safety”
(Is. 14:30).

Watch news reports about young people and the recession:

The CBS Evening News has been broadcasting a series of reports on the recession’s impact on young people and families, and what they are doing about it. Viewing some of these reports may help stimulate your group discussion. See info at: <http://www.cbsnews.com/sections/eveningnews/main3420.shtml>