



# FAMILIES & KIDS NEWSLETTER

Offering practical, spiritual, and fun resources for families following Jesus together.  
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November 2017

## STILL FEELING LIVELY IN NOVEMBER

Never mind the dark days and cold weather, there's lots going on in Kids Church and Youth Group this fall! Read on for our calendar, a look back at the retreat, and reflections from our Kids and Youth leaders.

This month the Preschoolers and Kindergarteners are moving through the Old Testament stories from the Ten Commandments to the building of the Temple; the Elementary Group is hearing about the many ways the kings of Israel and Judah failed God and the people, as we look towards a new kind of king in Jesus. The middle schoolers are finishing up their Old Testament stop-motion animation projects, and will be screening them on December 3. And the High School Youth group meeting time has moved from 11:30 on Sunday to 9:30.

### GODLY PLAY IN ACTION

by Kim Messenger

In preschool and kindergarten Kids Church we use an approach called Godly Play which has its roots in the work of Maria Montessori. Recently a fellow Godly Play teacher shared this article, "7 Key Phrases Montessori Teachers Use and Why We Should Use Them Too". I found one phrase particularly apt for helping children learn how to be part of the community of Kids Church. Rather than issuing an order like "Sit down while you eat your bagel," we try to remind children by using objective statements like, "In Kids Church we sit down at the table while we're eating." An objective statement simply reminds children how the community works and leads to fewer arguments.

I can tell you this strategy works like a charm when it comes to kids playing in the desert box. We simply remind them that if sand comes out of the box, even by accident, we put the desert box away till next time. We've never once had any push back. You could try this at home too. Think about what behaviors you want to encourage that will lead to a peaceful household. Then try a descriptive statement about how your household works. For example, instead of shouting, "Stop running," try saying, "In our family, we walk when we're inside the house." I wonder if you'll find your children more obliging. Let me know how it goes for you.

If you'd like to read more about the other 6 tips, take a look at [www.mother.ly/child/7-key-phrases-montessori-teachers-use-and-why-we-should-use-them-too](http://www.mother.ly/child/7-key-phrases-montessori-teachers-use-and-why-we-should-use-them-too)

### MOMENTS FROM THE RETREAT

The ~80 babies, kids, and youth who were part of the all-church retreat last month got to form and strengthen friendships within and across age groups while playing and creating together. It may have been late October, but everyone loved being on the beach!



### CONTACT US

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# FAMILIES CALENDAR

Sunday,  
November 12 **Child Dedication.**  
9:30 AM in main service.

Saturday,  
November 18 **Parents Night Out.**  
**5-8 PM in Ministry Center.**  
Enjoy an evening without your kids. Registration is full—contact [lindainkang@gmail.com](mailto:lindainkang@gmail.com) for info about the next date!

Sunday,  
November 26 **No Kids Church or Youth Group.**  
Our children's and youth programs take a break over the Thanksgiving long weekend.

Friday,  
December 1 **Families Advent Potluck.**  
**5:30-7:30 PM in the Chapel.**  
Bring a potluck dish to share. Come for storytelling, a kid-friendly craft, and the chance to connect with other parents. For info contact [kim@reservoirchurch.org](mailto:kim@reservoirchurch.org).

Sunday,  
December 3 **Light in the Darkness—Advent begins at Reservoir, at 9:30 & 11:30 AM services.**  
There will be a special participatory liturgy at both services. You'll be invited to hear the story of Christmas afresh, using the Godly Play approach your children experience in Kids Church.

Sunday,  
December 3 **Middle School Youth Group film screening.**  
**11:00-11:30 in the MPR.**  
The Middle School Youth Group proudly invites you to the world premier of their Old Testament stop-motion animation films.

Sunday,  
December 17 **Elementary Kids Church Christmas Show.**  
All are welcome to attend! 11:00 in the MPR.

Sunday,  
December 24 **Christmas Eve Services.**  
Morning service, 10:30-11:30 AM  
Evening service, 7:30-8:30 PM  
There will be no Kids Church or Youth Group on Christmas Eve.

## CHECKING SOCIAL MEDIA

by Tory Tolles

Recently, I've read a spate of articles and books that discuss teenagers, technology, and mental health trends (see a partial reading list below). One common thread is the observation of our unprecedented use of technology, specifically social media, and the (sometimes documented) negative effect that usage has on our self esteem. Studies with adults have shown that randomly assigned people who stop using Facebook for a week report significant improvements in their mental health, as demonstrated by feeling happier, less lonely, and less depressed, than control groups who maintain their current Facebook habits. Self-reported data from teens seems to suggest a similar pattern.

I initially balked at some of the stark numbers different people cited in these articles. Then I decided to document my own habits and see if I noticed any patterns. My first experiment was to count the number of times a day I reach for my phone. I was shocked to discover that my count was not that far off many of the teens interviewed in these stories. Then, in this highly rigorous study of  $n=1$ , I tried to pause each time I opened a social media application to check my motivation. Most commonly, I reached for social media when I was bored or bummed and wanted to check out for a few minutes. I then tried to assess how I felt after using social media, and generally, I didn't feel better, and usually, I felt worse.

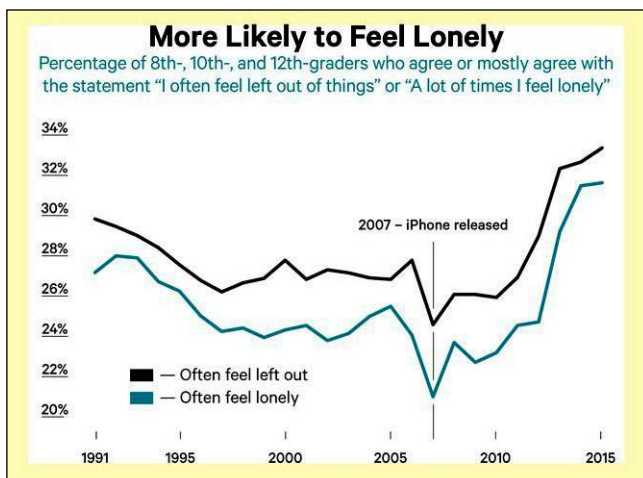
In the last few weeks, I've tried to cultivate a few new habits to help me be more intentional in my use of technology. Instead of in my pocket, I keep my phone in one location where I have to walk to use it. I moved social media applications off of my home screen, so I have to scroll to find them (to give me an extra second or two to reflect on why I am using them). The downside is that I have definitely missed some birthdays and other important moments in friends' lives. The upside is that I feel more in control, and I think, happier.

Social media is a really important tool and a great way to communicate with many. I have found that by being slightly more intentional in my usage, I can achieve some of the benefits without some of the downsides.

If you are willing, please share your thoughts on these topics. What's your experience with technology, social media, and mental health? Do you see any relationship between them? Have you tried anything that works or doesn't work to help you use technology? Do young people have a unique experience with technology and social media, or is it the same for everyone?

### For further reading:

- » [www.nytimes.com/2017/10/11/magazine/why-are-more-american-teenagers-than-ever-suffering-from-severe-anxiety.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/11/magazine/why-are-more-american-teenagers-than-ever-suffering-from-severe-anxiety.html)
- » [www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/09/has-the-smartphone-destroyed-a-generation/534198/](http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/09/has-the-smartphone-destroyed-a-generation/534198/)
- » [www.simonandschuster.com/books/iGen/Jean-M-Twenge/9781501151989](http://www.simonandschuster.com/books/iGen/Jean-M-Twenge/9781501151989)



Graph from *The Atlantic*