

# THE PARENT SOURCE

YOUR CULTURAL CONNECTION

MAR 2011

## What's inside

Pg.2

- ◆ Underage Drinking
- ◆ Sexting Update

Pg.3

- ◆ Facial Piercings
- ◆ Role Models

Pg.4

- ◆ In-App Purchases

Pg.5

- ◆ Questions



### The Parent Source is composed by:

Upside Down Ministries  
 www.ud4christ.com  
 Teen Culture Specialist  
**Robert Smith**  
 P O Box 232  
 Lawton, Ok 73502  
[robert@ud4christ.com](mailto:robert@ud4christ.com)

### JUST HOW POPULAR IS LADY GAGA ?

- >>>She has close to **29 million fans on Facebook.**
- >>>Some of her most popular music videos on Facebook have been viewed over **300 million times.**
- >>>She is the **most followed person on twitter** with more than 7.7 million followers (that's more people than the entire population of Israel)
- >>>Her recently released single "Born This Way" is already **number one on the billboard charts.** It also broke several other records in its first 5 days of being released.



If nothing else you should know that she is set to release a new album in May and with the rapid success of her new single it is safe to say that her songs are going to be dominating the airwaves for much of 2011. Although her fan base is pretty diverse, a good portion of it is made up of teenage girls and young women. Another portion of GaGa's fan base is composed of people who can relate to her message of self-empowerment. The people in society who feel like they have been marginalized because of who they are.

Don't be drag, just be a queen  
 Whether you're broke or evergreen  
 You're black, white, beige, chola  
 descent

You're lebanese, you're orient  
 Whether life's disabilities  
 Left you outcast, bullied or teased  
 Rejoice and love yourself today  
 'Cause baby, you were born this  
 way

No matter gay, straight or bi  
 lesbian, transgendered life  
 I'm on the right track, baby  
 I was born to survive  
 No matter black, white or beige  
 chola or orient made  
 I'm on the right track, baby  
 I was born to be brave  
 I'm beautiful in my way,  
 'Cause God makes no mistakes  
 I'm on the right track, baby  
 I was born this way

Don't hide yourself in regret,  
 Just love yourself and you're set  
 I'm on the right track, baby  
 I was born this way

### What Is Her Message?

It is important for people to realize that GaGa is much more than just a musician. She is a socially savvy woman who is very intentional about connecting with her fans on a deeper level than most other musicians. She has been very outspoken about her support of the gay and lesbian community and teaches her "Little Monsters" (her term for her fans) to embrace who they are. Hence, her newest song "Born this way" (lyrics to the left). It is crucial for parents to consider why this song is so popular. Perhaps, its message of embracing who you are no matter what really resonates with this generation. Notice there is nothing condemning about her lyrics. In fact, the message seems to be pretty clear. On the outside it sounds good and even looks appealing. Not to mention it does contain some truth. Yes, God did create humans in His own image. We are all very worthy and valuable in His eyes. However, it is not true that God agrees with every thought or intention of our sinful by nature human hearts. Because we are compromised by sin, some of our desires are misdirected even some of the ones we are born with. This could be used as a great conversation starter with your teen. Point out that we do desire sin from birth and if we try to find redemption in ourselves we will never truly be satisfied.

## NEW STUDY SHOWS PARENTS ARE SUPPLYING TEENS WITH ALCOHOL!!!



A recent study conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) shed new light on Teens and alcohol use. The study found that an estimated 709,000 US teens between the ages of 12 to 14 are drinking beer, liquor and other alcoholic beverages. What was shocking about this study wasn't necessarily the fact that teens are drinking, but where they are getting their alcohol from. **This study showed that 5.9% of 12-14 year olds have used alcohol in the past month.** That is a pretty alarming number. But, of that 5.9 percent, **45 percent of them got the alcohol from a parent** or other family member or they took it from their home without permission. About 15 percent of these kids just took the liquor, another 15 percent got it directly from their parent or guardian and another 14 percent got it from another relative. There really is no clear conclusion as to why parents would give their children alcohol. Parents who allow their teens to drink are putting their kids at serious risk. Peter Delany, the director of SAMHSA's Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality said that "if you drink alcohol before the age of 15, you are about five times more likely to experience a serious problem with alcohol or other drug use at or after the age of 21." Statistics also show that approximately **5,000 people die of underage drinking each year.** This study did conclude that the battle against teens and alcohol use starts in the home. Parents should be actively discussing the dangers associated with alcohol use. They should also discuss with their teen how to properly respond if they are ever given the opportunity to drink. Even though it sounds like common sense, parents should never under any circumstance encourage or allow their teen to drink.



## SEXTING UPDATE

This issue continues to be a cultural hot topic for teens. The popular teen show "Glee" recently promoted this behavior in one of their episodes and pop-superstars Beyonce and Lady GaGa collaborated on the 2010 hit song "Video Phone" which also encouraged the act of "Sexting." Commonsensemedia.com gives the following advice to parents on how to handle this issue:

- 1.) Don't wait for an incident to happen to your child or your child's friend before you talk about the consequences of "Sexting."
- 2.) Remind your kids that once an image is sent, it can never be retrieved. Talk about pressures to send revealing photos.
- 3.) Teach your children that the buck stops with them.
- 4.) Check out [Thatsnotcool.com](http://Thatsnotcool.com) (it's a fabulous site that gives kids the language and support to take texting and cell phone power back into their own hands.)

**22% of teens admit that technology makes them personally more forward and aggressive.**

**22% of teen girls and 20% of teen boys have sent nude or semi-nude photos of themselves over the internet or their phones.**

**38% of teens say exchanging sexy content makes dating or hooking up with others more likely.**

**29% of teens believe those exchanging sexy content are "expected to date or hook up."**

## YOUR GUIDE TO TODAY'S POPULAR FACE PIERCINGS

10 to 15 years ago it seemed the only piercing teens were begging for was the common ear piercing. Even at that many parents were often hesitant to allow their kids to take that plunge. Then tongue rings and belly piercings became a popular trend with teens and young adults. But, even those piercings were easily hidden. However the newest trend in the area of piercing is the facial piercing. There aren't any official statistics on this trend but experts estimate **somewhere between 25-40 percent of teens have piercings other than the traditional ear piercing.** Many popular celebrities have dawned facial piercings. Some believe this is the reason this trend has become so popular. The goal of this article is not to approve or dis-approve of these piercings. As you attempt to relate to your teens and other teens around you, I wanted to provide you with the common name for popular facial piercings. Remember, as parents it is your responsibility to help your teen make wise decisions. Even if you do say no, at least hear your teen out. Encourage them to make a list of the pros and cons and even help them research the risks associated with such piercings. You may learn something about them and how they currently view themselves.



### ANGEL BITES

Two piercings on opposite sides of the upper lip. Very similar to snake bites, but on the upper lip rather than lower.



### SNAKE BITES

Someone gets two piercings on the lower lip. One on the right side and one on the left side.



### MONROE

A piercing above the upper lip. It was given its name because the location of the piercing is like that of Marilyn Monroe's beauty mark.



### MEDUSA

A piercing that is situated above the lip in the middle, underneath the middle of the nose, and above the upper lip.



### DIMPLES

A piercing in the cheek that is often referred to as dimples.

## NEW STUDY REVEALS WHO TEENS ADMIRE MOST TODAY AS A ROLE MODEL.

The Barna Group recently conducted a study that sampled teenagers, 13 to 17 years old, across the country. Their goal was to determine whom they admire most today as a role model, other than their parents. The follow up question tried to determine why they would define that person as a role model. David Kinnaman, who directed the study, explained that parents were left out of the assessment because so many teenagers— particularly younger ones— have high regard for their parents or feel compelled to list their parents as role models. Previous research shows that mentioning parents is almost an automatic response for many.

### WHAT WAS THEIR ANSWER?

Even when parents were eliminated from the equation, family members still come out on top. Relatives were the most commonly mentioned role models. With 37% of teens naming a relative as the person they admire the most. Grandparents rated at the top of this list, but sisters, brothers, cousins, aunts, and uncles were also mentioned. After “family,” teens listed teachers and coaches (11%), friends (9%), and pastors or other religious leaders they know personally (6%). It was interesting to find that the majority of teens said the people they most admire and imitate are those with whom they maintain a personal connection, friendship, or interaction. The rest of the list was as follows: entertainers (6%), sports heroes (5%), political leaders (4%), faith leaders (4%), business leaders (1%), authors (1%), science and medical professionals (1%), other artists (1%), and members of the military (1%).

### WHY DID THEY CHOOSE THAT PERSON?

There was a broad range of reasons why they named a particular role model. (26%) mentioned the personality traits of that person (e.g., caring about others, being loving and polite, being courageous, and being fun were some of the characteristics mentioned most often). Another factor in teens' answers was finding someone to emulate (22%) or that they would like to “follow in the footsteps” of their chosen role model.

# Kid's Culture

## FREE GAMES IN APP STORE MAY PROVE TO BE COSTLY



A recent article published by The Washington Post drew attention to the new phenomenon of in-app purchases. You are all familiar with Applications (Apps) that can be downloaded on smart phones, I-phones and I-pads. Some of these apps cost money and many of them are free. A recent twist that has been added to many free app games is the option to spend real money to purchase items that will allow you to advance in that game. This has been done in effort

for programmers to make money off of their “free” games. The Washington Post told the story of an 8 year old girl named Madison, who during her winter break downloaded the free iPhone game “Smurfs’ Village” to her family I-Pad (with her moms knowledge). Madison spent much of her break working hard to dress up her simple mushroom home in the Smurfs’ Village. You can imagine the look on her mothers face when she received a \$1,400 bill from apple. Madison did not realize that the Smurfberries she was buying on the game were real purchases. Who could blame her? In many other children's games, they require virtual payments of bells, pretend coins, treasure chests and many other fake currencies. However, in this game and many other games, these are real purchases that carry real charges.

These games are part of a category of applications on Apple’s iTunes store that are free to download but let companies charge users for products and services when the application is launched. Following the lead of Apple, Google also introduced these “in-app purchases” for users who own Android phones. In order to make these purchases you must enter in your iTunes password before they can charge your account. In Madison's case, her older sister knew the password and entered it for her. They both didn't realize that it was charging their mothers account. Parents should know that mobile apps are a new platform that developers are using to target kid gamers. They assume that parents are allowing their kids to have phones at young ages or put games on their phones for their kids to play with. Parents should realize that even though a game claims to be free it may have in-app purchases built into the game. For this reason, Apple says that it is required to enter in a password in order to purchase anything in a game. Make sure your child knows that if they are prompted to try to enter a password than they do not need to proceed. However, it is important for you to know that after a password has been entered successfully, there is a 15 minute window where it does not have to be entered again to make a purchase. So, if you enter a password to download an app make sure you wait 15 minutes before allowing your kids to play with it or they will not be prompted to re-enter that password to make a purchase. Also, there are settings on I-phones and androids alike that allow you to restrict downloading and transactions.





## Parent Discussion questions:

### Lady GAGA

- 1) Why do you think Lady GaGa is so popular?
- 2) What do you think about the message behind her new song "Born this way?"

### Alcohol Study

- 1) Do you have any friends whose parents or family members have allowed them to drink alcohol?
- 2) What are some of the dangers you see associated with alcohol use?

### Sexting Update

- 1) How should you respond if anybody ever asked you to send a "sex message" to them?
- 2) What are the dangers of this kind of behavior?
- 3) Why do you think this is so popular?

### Role Models

- 1) How would you answer the question in the survey?
- 2) Why would you choose that person?