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### DISNEY TAKES A NEW LOOK AT PROM

In this new teen film, Disney strays away from the stereotypes that are associated with Prom and focuses more on friendships, fun, and teenage love. It is refreshing to see culture approach Prom as an event that isn't centered around sex and partying. Teens desire to go to prom for a variety of reasons. But, not all teens are out to party hard and get wasted.

### WHAT DOES CULTURE TEACH TEENS TO EXPECT FROM PROM?

Many critics complained that Disney's attempt to tackle prom would not be culturally accurate because they would not include cursing, sex and alcohol. One on-line blogger basically said "that's what prom is all about." When I read that blog I began to wonder, is that truly what teens are hoping to get out of their prom night? I guess that all depends on the kid. It is important for parents to know that not all teens view prom the same way. However, it is safe to say that culture has placed a high expectation on what teens should get out of their prom experience. Lots of effort goes into picking the perfect outfit, restaurant, ride and date. It's worth noting that most of the behavior that parents are concerned about doesn't take place at prom, but take place at the after parties. There is an extreme amount of pressure that is placed on teens to do things they wouldn't normally do on this "special night." Lots of statistics exist about the dangers of prom and the heightened possibility of participating in destructive behavior like; having sex, drinking, drug use, drinking and driving and even loss of virginity. Culture rarely portrays these behaviors in a realistic manner. Most of the time, teens are taught that this is just part of it.



### 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)

### PARENTS SHOULD...

- ◆ Attempt to understand why prom is such a big deal to most teens.
- ◆ Help your teen to decide if they should go to prom and if so, help them set safe expectations for that night.
- ◆ Get all the details. Who are they going with, how are they getting there, where are they going before, etc... don't be afraid to have your teen check in with you throughout the night.
- ◆ Consider hosting an after prom event at your house or getting together with other parents and plan a safe alternative.





## THE RETURN OF MORTAL KOMBAT

The much anticipated 9th installment of Mortal Kombat hit the shelves in April and has already become a huge hit! This is the first Mortal Kombat game to come out since 2008. In 2008, Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe was released and it seemed that this franchise had opted to go in a less violent direction. Breaking away from the over the top gore and only receiving a T-rating. However In the newest installment of this fight to the death classic, game makers said that they wanted to go back to their roots and make sure that this game received an M-rating. They were also sure to point out that there would be plenty of gore, fatalities and over the top violence. So it is fair to say that this game definitely earned its M- rating.

### PARENTS SHOULD KNOW:

1. **PROFANITIES ARE A PART OF THIS GAME.** Words such as F—k, s—t and b—h are all present throughout game play.
2. **FATALITIES ARE BACK AND AS GREUSOME AS EVER.** Players can perform different finishing moves such as snapping bones, ripping flesh in half, gunshots to the head, decapitations and much more.
3. **X—RAY EFFECTS ADD A NEW DIMENSION.** During fatalities, you can see what is happening inside of your enemies body while your are fighting them. This means you can see ribs breaking and skulls cracking when they get hit with a sledgehammer.
4. **GRAPHICS ARE IN HIGH DEFINITION** and even in 3-D on compatible televisions (PS3 version only) this means that the squirting blood, breaking bones and rolling heads look more realistic than ever.

*As gaming technology continues to advance, it is important to remember that this action looks and feels more realistic than ever before. In many cases, you are not just playing the game but it feels like you are a part of it.*

## The F BOMB IN MUSIC

In the 53 year history of the Grammy's no song with the "F" word in its title had ever scored a nomination. That all changed this year when Cee Lo Green's huge hit "F—k You" received five nominations. Of course when this song was played on the radio it received a makeover and was changed to "Forget you". This version also took out the "S" word and the "N" Word. However, the song in its original form was the one nominated for the 5 Grammys. This wasn't the only song that frequently dropped the "F" bomb that received a nomination. Mumford and Sons "Little Lion Man" which uses the f word frequently in its chorus also received a bid for best rock song of the year. Critics praised the Grammys for not letting the questionable lyrics sway them. The acceptance of this word in music seems to be a new trend that may become more prominent on the billboard charts in months to come. Right now, two songs in the top 15 have this word in their titles. "F—k you" by Cee Lo Green and "F—n Perfect" by Pink. It should be noted that Cee Lo nor Mumford and Sons won any awards at this years Grammys. However, in an article about this topic written in Entertainment Weekly they asked the question "Why are the Grammys getting behind these foulmouthed favorites?" They responded by saying "probably because the tunes have a lot more to offer than mere novelty appeal. They're just good songs, F or no F.

These cultural examples could spark a great conversation with your teen about "what makes a song good." It is easy to accept a song because we like the way it sounds. But our kids should be encouraged to consider the content and message that accompanies the music before deciding to give it the thumbs up.



I am continually surprised at the advice “Experts” offer on how to keep children safe on Facebook. So, in an effort to educate parents about Facebook and their children, Chad Gleaves of easyparentalcontroltips.com compiled a list of 4 things that work and 6 things that are good suggestions but don't always work.

### What Doesn't ALWAYS Work!

- 1. Make sure your child friends you.** *Why It doesn't ALWAYS work*—Every post can be sent to specific people or groups and can even be sent to everyone BUT you.
- 2. Make sure your child only friends people they know in real life.** *Why It doesn't ALWAYS work*—Your child can go into privacy settings and exclude you from seeing your friend list.
- 3. Discuss boundaries with your child.** *Why It doesn't ALWAYS work*—Although this is important and NEEDS to be done regularly, children sometimes forget the rules or just don't understand how they should apply them to every situation. So they may say or post something they thought was OK and then find out later that it was inappropriate.
- 4. Limit your child's access to the computer.** *Why It doesn't ALWAYS work*—I am a big advocate for limiting your child's access to computer and putting the computer in a central location in your house. But since we are talking about Facebook, this doesn't work for Facebook. Facebook can be accessed on their phone, at school, at a friend's house, and really just about ANYWHERE. So relying on a monitoring system at your home will not cover Facebook.
- 5. Invest in parental control software that monitors your child's computer activity.** *Why It doesn't ALWAYS work*—I love parental control software and they play an important role in protecting your children. But in the case of Facebook, they simply will not work because your children have access to Facebook in other places besides your home computer. Also MOST parental control software do not have the ability to monitor Facebook like SocialShield does.
- 6. Do not allow your kids to post pictures.** *Why It doesn't ALWAYS work*—posting pictures seems innocent enough, but this can give out personal information that may put children at risk from a predator. However, if your child does decide to post a pic and they don't want you to know about it, they can set the permissions on that picture for their school friends only, then you will never know whether they are posting or not.

### What Works!

- 1. Don't let them get an account.** Now, this may sound obvious, but it's the truth. The best way to protect your kids is to make sure they don't have an account before you feel they are ready for one.
  - 2. Make sure you have their passwords.** You should have their e-mail password as well as their Facebook password. This will allow you to check their privacy settings and make sure they are secure. Let them know this is a non-negotiable and it is for their safety.
  - 3. Make sure you set the privacy settings on Facebook.** Facebook will show your phone number and other personal information if you don't turn it off. Make sure you are there to help your child set up their account.
- 1. The BEST way to ensure you see everything that happens with your child's Facebook is to use SOCIALSHIELD.** I cannot stress how powerful SocialShield is because it sends you every picture posted, and even looks for keywords like drugs, sex and other questionable conversations and organizes them into one email for your quick review.

# Kid's Culture

## Check out this year's Winners:



Every year **Nickelodeon Hosts their annual Kids Choice Awards**, where kids go online and vote for their favorites in several categories. Here are the results for 2011:

- Reality Show- American Idol
- Music Group- Black Eyed Peas
- TV Actor -Dylan Sprouse
- Cartoon- "Spongebob"
- Movie- "The Karate Kid"
- Actor- Johnny Depp  
(Alice in Wonderland)
- Actress- Miley Cyrus (The Last Song)
- Male Singer- Justin Bieber
- Book- Diary of a Wimpy Kid Series
- Female Singer- Katy Perry
- Song- "Baby" (Justin Bieber)
- Animated Movie- "Despicable Me"
- TV Show- iCarly
- TV Actress- Selena Gomez
- Video Game- "Just Dance 2"
- Male Athlete- Shaquille O'Neal
- Female Athlete- Lindsey Vonn
- Big Help Award- Justin Timberlake



The Black Eyed Peas have been around for a long time. They have won this Kids Choice Award for two years in a row! Their music is very catchy and has some of the most infectious beats in all of hip-hop and pop. This is one reason they are a teen and kid favorite. However, their lyrics are pretty unpredictable. They have had songs that are thought provoking and clean such as "Where is the Love" & "Generation Now." They also have songs with suggestive language, heavy partying, and sexual references such as "I gotta feeling," "My Humps" and "Dirty Bit" to name a few. It's important to listen to each song discerningly, pay attention to content and not the beat.

Is an American Alpine Ski racer who caught Americas attention in the 2010 winter Olympics by becoming the first ever American woman to win gold in the downhill. Parents should know she was voted # 59 in Maxim's hot 100 list and was featured in their magazine and Sports Illustrated swimsuit edition.



Become familiar with these stars and take the time to see who is influencing your child. Just because they win a kids choice award doesn't always mean their material is appropriate for children.



Parent Discussion questions:

- 1.) Why do you think prom is such a big deal?
- 2.) What are some common assumptions people make about prom? Are these true or not?
- 3.) How do you think violent video games like Mortal Kombat effect the people who play them?
- 3.) What do you think makes a song good or bad?
- 4.) Do you think the F word is becoming more socially acceptable? Why or why not?
- 5.) How secure do you think your privacy settings are on Facebook?