

Scroll with Wisdom

For teens ages 12–14 · about 45–60 minutes · Moral Issues for Teens · Media & Technology · game
Shine or Stumble? · built on **Romans 12:2, Philippians 4:8, and Colossians 3:17**

Your students live inside a feed. Likes, filters, trends, and DMs shape how they see themselves, their friends, and even God. Social media can bless — encouragement, Scripture, creativity, connection across distance. It can also wound — comparison spirals, lust-by-scroll, gossip threads, disrespect toward parents, and hours vanishing into nothing eternal. This session is not anti-phone. It is pro-transformation: do not be conformed to the world; be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Before you teach anything, pray.

Some students are addicted to validation; some have been bullied online; some post things at midnight they regret by morning. Ask the Spirit for honesty without humiliation — wisdom that leads to boundaries, not a shame spiral. You are teaching digital discipleship, not confiscating every app.

The heart of the lesson

Social platforms are powerful tools for communication and self-expression — and dangerous for heart, mind, and soul when they run unchecked. The root issue is often identity outsourced to an algorithm: am I enough if the post flops? am I loved if someone leaves me on read? Proverbs 4:23 says guard your heart above all else. Philippians 4:8 sets what the eyes and mind should feed on. Romans 12:2 refuses the world's mold — including the mold of trending content, comparison culture, and performative Christianity.

Don't let the feed form you — let God renew your mind.

Symptoms in a 12–14 life: checking notifications before prayer, mood crashing with follower counts, scrolling immodest or crude content "just a little," subtweeting or gossip in group chats, venting disrespect about parents or leaders, and losing sleep to endless reels. Paul says be careful how you walk, redeeming the time (Eph. 5:15–16). Moses prayed teach us to number our days (Ps. 90:12). What you post reflects your heart (Luke 6:45) — out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks, and the thumb types.

Would Jesus double-tap this — or ask you to delete it?

ROMANS 12:2

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your **mind**, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God..."

COLOSSIANS 3:17

"And **whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

How the session flows

- 1 Name the feed.** How social media shapes mood and identity. ~8 min
- 2 Teach shine vs. stumble.** Heart, comparison, content, time, testimony. ~12 min
- 3 Play the game.** "Shine or Stumble?" on screen. ~12–15 min
- 4 Quiet honesty.** Reference card, private reflection. ~5 min
- 5 Worksheet.** In class or take-home practice. ~15 min
- 6 Close with boundaries.** Prayer and one digital habit for the week. ~8 min

Screen for the game, printed cards and worksheets, pens. You do not need to ban every platform by name — teach filters students can apply on TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, or whatever comes next.

Leading it, part by part

Name the feed

Ask: which app eats most of your time? How do you feel after twenty minutes — better, worse, or numb? Let them answer without turning it into a public confession. Land this: the feed is designed to keep you scrolling. That is not your fault, but it is your stewardship. God cares what enters your mind and what exits your thumbs.

Teach shine vs. stumble

Walk through five filters from Scripture. **Heart and mind:** Proverbs 4:23; Philippians 4:8 — what you scroll shapes how you feel, think, and act. **Comparison:** Galatians 6:4–5; 2 Corinthians 10:12 — measuring yourself against filtered photos is unwise; likes are not God's scorecard. **Content:** Matthew 5:28; Ephesians 5:4; Proverbs 20:19 — lust, crude jokes, gossip, and disrespect toward parents (Ex. 20:12) stumble others and your own walk. **Time:** Ephesians 5:15–16; Psalm 90:12 — endless scrolling wastes potential; number your days. **Testimony:** Luke 6:45; Matthew 5:16; Colossians 3:17 — posts and comments reveal the heart; let your light shine online, not your old self.

Teach hope: social media can encourage, share Scripture, and build others up (Eph. 4:29). Set boundaries — time limits, digital Sabbath, unfollow what fails Phil. 4:8, accountability with parents. The platform should serve you, not master you (1 Cor. 6:12 logic).

Play the game

Run "Shine or Stumble?" twelve to fifteen minutes. Round 1 sorts online habits; Round 2 anchors Bible principles; Round 3 tackles comparison, gossip, and late-night scrolling; Round 4 drills key verses. Bridge afterward: points are fun; a renewed mind is the win.

Quiet honesty

Hand out the reference card. Promise plainly that nobody is collecting it. Give five quiet minutes for students to name one account, habit, or post pattern they would change if Jesus read their feed — without saying it aloud to the room. Protect the silence.

Worksheet

Reinforce Romans 12:2, Philippians 4:8, and Colossians 3:17; T/F on comparison and time; one boundary for the week. Pairs or homework both work.

Close with boundaries

Invite each student to pick one shine habit (encourage someone, share truth, log off on time) and cut one stumble pattern (comparison scroll, crude share, disrespect vent). Pray for students bullied online and for parents helping with limits. Offer leaders for students who feel owned by the feed.

Take it further

- Why must we guard our hearts when using social media? (Prov. 4:23)
- How does Philippians 4:8 apply to what you scroll and watch?
- What does 2 Corinthians 10:12 warn about comparing ourselves online?
- How do Matthew 5:28 and Ephesians 5:4 apply to content you view or share?
- How can social media waste time, and what should we do instead? (Eph. 5:15–16)
- What does Colossians 3:17 say about Christian life online?
- Why do Luke 6:45 and your posts belong in the same conversation?
- How can you use social media to encourage others and glorify God? (Eph. 4:29)
- What boundaries will keep social media from controlling you?

A final word

Teens need the feed less than they think and God's voice more than they know. Give them permission to shine online and courage to unfollow what stumbles them. The goal is not disappearing from the internet — it is being transformed while you're on it. When they learn shine vs. stumble, they can still post — but the feed won't post them.