



EDUCATEEMPOWERKIDS.ORG

Lesson:

Teaching our Kids

# Social Media Etiquette



## BACKGROUND

**Social media** is our way to share our lives and keep in contact with others, and ultimately, is a great tool to use to spread good, helpful, honest information. With so much harmful misuse associated with social media, it's important for children and families to be aware of proper use and **etiquette**. Social media makes it easy to say or share whatever you want while hiding behind a screen. It's important to think before we share, and to be positive in our social media encounters so that we can counteract the negative.



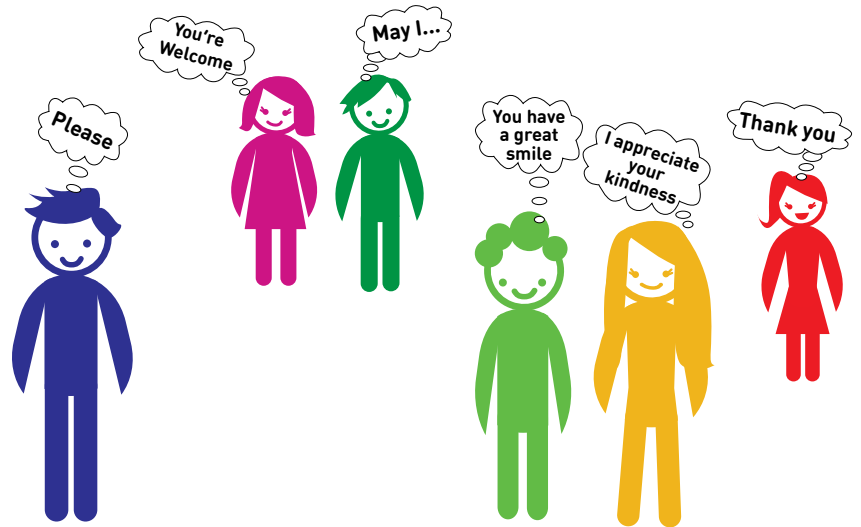
## PREPARATION

- *This lesson is based on the assumption that your kids are at least 13 years old before they get on social media and should probably wait longer!* However, this lesson can and should be given before a kid is on social media if possible.
- Evaluate which social media outlets your children use. Do they have Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr, or Pinterest? One or the other? All of these?
- Evaluate your own social media usage. Think about how you act via social media and be prepared to share any experiences you may have in using good or bad behavior.
- Ask yourself if you follow your children on all of their social media accounts. Do you recognize the type of posts and comments they make?
- Determine which behaviors you want to focus on improving and/or teaching.



## OBJECTIVE

Teach your child necessary manners associated with social media. Emphasize to them that as they practice and implement proper behaviors in their online lives, they will better understand the importance of using social media as a tool for good.



## LESSON: WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA ETIQUETTE?

Social Media Etiquette refers to our manners while we are online. All of us understand manners that we've been taught since we were little. These can include saying "thank you", "please", "excuse me", and "you're welcome." Others might include how we show respect and present ourselves to others: greeting others politely, not interrupting someone while they're talking, and knocking on a door before entering. While these are important manners to know and implement, social media manners are just as important to know and use as well!



## DISCUSSION: TEACHING MANNERS TO USE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

- 🗨 Be kind! Don't criticize others. Instead, compliment others
  - If someone is bullying you or a friend, mention it to a parent. Don't lash out at the bully, instead, try to be patient with them
  - If someone is making fun of your beliefs, rather than arguing, offer them a chance for a friendly discussion. Be respectful! Avoid "I'm right, you're wrong" statements
  - Don't be afraid to block someone on social media if they will not leave you alone. Stopping that person from contacting you is better than engaging in an online argument
- 🗨 If other people are involved in your picture, ask for their consent before posting it
- 🗨 Don't share personal information
  - Social security number
  - Contact information (phone number and email)
  - Physical address
  - Your current location
  - Passwords
  - Information about other family members (especially don't do this without consent)
- 🗨 Don't share or do anything inappropriate
  - Pornography
  - **Over sharing** personal life details that could make someone uncomfortable or potentially endanger you
  - Making fun of someone
  - Embarrassing pictures of other people
- 🗨 Share uplifting quotes
- 🗨 Respect differences
  - If someone posts about how they don't celebrate Christmas, either leave it alone, or be respectful in asking why

## DISCUSS THE DANGERS OF GOSSIPING AND CYBER-BULLYING

Examples may include but aren't limited to:

- Q How you speak about others ultimately expresses how you view yourself
- Q Putting others down doesn't make you happier
- Q When someone starts to negatively gossip, talk about the good in the person instead

## MAKE GOALS AS A FAMILY TO BE A BETTER INFLUENCE VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

Examples may include but aren't limited to:

- Q Share an uplifting quote once a week
- Q Comment 3 positive things every day
- Q Unfollow negative pages and profiles

## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR TEEN

- Q What social media do you use?
- Q What kinds of conversations are you having on social media?
- Q Do you comment with uplifting words or criticize individuals?
- Q How do you handle someone who is being rude to you via social media?
- Q How can you use social media to help others or spread awareness about an important issue?
- Q How much time are you spending on social media? How much time is too much?
- Q Have you seen me (the parent) behave in an embarrassing way on social media? Do you have any advice for me when it comes to social media?









# ACTIVITIES

## Activity #1

Pose scenarios with your children and use Ask yourself

**Scenario 1:** Mary is being bullied at school. Out of hurt and frustration, she wants to give harmful payback. Mary takes a picture of the bully, doodles on their face, and posts it on social media for everyone to laugh at.







### Ask Yourself

-  Is Mary's post on social media clear in her message?
-  Does Mary really understand the issue or concern she's posting about?
-  Is Mary being true to herself?
-  Is Mary being authentic?
-  Is Mary's message helpful?
-  Is Mary's message kind?
-  How will Mary's message be received?
-  Is this something Mary wants on the internet FOREVER?









**Scenario 2:** Bob and Emily volunteered to walk dogs for a service project for Helping Hands Club. Emily decided to only sign her name on the paperwork and posted a picture of just her walking the dogs on Facebook with zero proof of Bob being involved.

 **Ask Yourself**

-  Is Emily's post on social media clear in her message?
-  Does Emily really understand the issue or concern she's posting about?
-  Is Emily being authentic?
-  Is Emily's message helpful?
-  How will Emily's message be received?
-  Is this something Emily wants on the internet FOREVER?

**Scenario 3:** Hannah shared an uplifting quote on Instagram about loving yourself.

 **Ask Yourself**

-  Is Hannah's post on social media clear in her message?
-  Does Hannah really understand the issue or concern she's posting about?
-  Is Hannah being authentic?
-  Is Hannah's message helpful?
-  How will Hannah's message be received?
-  Is this something Emily wants on the internet FOREVER?

Emphasize and teach the following chart with your children (from our book, Petra's Power to See: A Media Literacy Adventure):



## Activity #2

Play Cyber BINGO! (age recommendation: 8+)

Directions:

1. Hand out BINGO cards to your children
2. Read a term
3. Have children mark off a compatible phrase on their BINGO card
4. Repeat steps 1-2 until you run out of terms



Here is the BINGO card (which can be found, here):



Here are the BINGO terms:

Name something you shouldn't do online (don't let friends use your account)	Name something you should do online (make kindness go viral)	What is it called when people are being rude or hurting you via social media? (cyberbullying)	What should you always do when you're done on social media? (always log out)
What should you say no to? (sexting)	What should be strong? (password)	What should you save? (evidence)	What's important to create? (digital reputation)
Name something you should do to balance your life (set limits on electronics)	Name something you shouldn't do online (post hurtful comments)	When you don't know what to do, you should... (reach out for help)	What should you do when you see something inappropriate? (report)
What do you unconsciously create? (Digital footprints)	Where does networking occur? (cyberspace)	What shouldn't you do in the virtual world? (create a fake account)	What shouldn't you respond to? (rude comments)

\*\*Some of these questions can have multiple answers and can be interchangeable (Ex 1: What shouldn't you do in the virtual world? The answer could be making rude comments, creating a fake account, or sexting. Ex 2: Name something you should do online? The answer could be report inappropriate behavior, make kindness go viral, set limits, etc.)

## FOLLOW UP

In a week, at family dinner, have a conversation and ask your children how they've improved their "netiquette" over the past week. Ask what they are grateful they learned. Challenge them to teach a friend the importance of social media etiquette.

## RELATED DISCUSSIONS/ RESOURCES

Our book *Noah's New Phone: A Story About Using Technology for Good* takes children on a journey recognizing the power of technology and how they can use it for good!



Our book *Petra's Power to See: A Media Literacy Adventure* has a whole section on social media with great information and discussion questions.



- All of the following topics can be found in our book *30 Days to a Stronger Child*
- Respect
- Leadership
- Boundaries
- Love
- Honesty
- And many more!



*5 Ways Kids can Use Smartphones for Good*



## GLOSSARY

**Behavior:** The way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others.

**Cyberbullying:** The use of electronic communication to bully a person.

**Etiquette:** Polite behavior in society or among members of a particular group.

**Manners:** A way in which a thing is done or happens.

**Over-sharing:** Revealing an inappropriate amount of detail about one's personal life.

**Social Media:** Websites and apps that people use to share information and develop personal and professional relationships. Facebook, Google+, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, and Twitter are examples of social media.

### CITATIONS

Smarts, C. (2015). Cyber Smarts. Retrieved 11 September 2019, from <https://www.themiddleschoolcounselor.com/2015/01/cyber-smarts.html?m=1>