

## Web Sites for the Journey

by Carol Duerksen

### MATERIALS AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- 1 This session takes place in a setting where you have access to a number of computers with internet access. You may want to gather in a home or café with wireless internet and bring a number of laptops to use. Students will be looking at websites, so it would be good to have one computer/laptop for every 2-3 students.
- 2 Let students know where you will be meeting, or carpool there together.
- 3 Copies of *With*, winter 07/08 or the article at the bottom of this session for each student.

### SESSION OUTLINE

- 1 Hand out the copies of *With* or the article at the bottom of this session.
- 2 Divide students among the computers, and ask them to look at all of the websites noted in the article. They should keep track of the websites that they like and would find helpful in the future.
- 3 Report back. Ask each student to share their favorite websites and what they liked or found useful about them.
- 4 Invite students to share websites that they think should be on the list that they utilize themselves.
- 5 Encourage students to take the article home with them and visit the websites again.

## Session Reproducibles

### “WEB SITES FOR THE JOURNEY”

By Adam S. Yoder

We're all spending a lot more time online these days. Being plugged in doesn't mean you have to unplug from God. There are numerous uplifting and helpful places to go on the Internet to meet God and grow your faith. Here are just a few places to visit hosted by our Christian brothers and sisters around the Net.

#### MEETING GOD

Maybe you desire some more one-on-one time with God, and you could use a little help talking with God. Check out Sacred Space ([www.sacredspace.ie](http://www.sacredspace.ie)) where you'll be led in a 5- to 10-minute prayer of reflection on a daily Scripture passage. Helpful questions are provided to encourage chat between you and God.

Looking for faith insights and wisdom from other young people? Visit Devozine ([www.upperroom.org/devozine](http://www.upperroom.org/devozine)), a devotional site written by and for teens. Read the daily story and meditation, based on Scripture and a theme for the week. The site has plenty of places for you to add your two cents and connect with other youth devo-seekers by sharing writings, poetry, prayer requests, thoughts, and stories.

If you're looking for an online Bible resource, then head to Bible Gateway ([www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)). Search for passages by key word, passage, or topic in more than a dozen versions including The Message. Multiple languages are available as well. By using the key word search, you are given a list in just seconds of the 33 places in the Bible where you can find the word youth. You'll also find 1,477 results for the name Jesus and 5,531 results for the word with.

#### MUSIC AND MEDIA

If you're trying to keep up with the Christian music scene, then click right over to Christ Community Music magazine, aka CCM ([www.ccmcom.com](http://www.ccmcom.com)). Stories, bios, Podcasts, tour schedules, and more are available.

To listen to live music with a positive, uplifting message that is cutting-edge, tune in to RadioU ([www.radiou.com](http://www.radiou.com)). You can listen to the Columbus station streaming live and find play lists and links to all the new stuff you want to hear again and again. This is the place that makes a band popular before they are, and you can say you knew them when.

#### HELP

When you're struggling with some tough emotional issues, it's good to know you're not alone. Seek some comfort and support at Nineline.org ([www.nineline.org](http://www.nineline.org)). E-mail a counselor to share your story, or read other youth queries and responses through the forum page. Find information for yourself or a friend regarding health, family, sex, relationships, suicide, depression, and abuse, among other topics. And if you still need a listening ear, give their toll-free number a call to talk directly to a counselor. Everything is free and confidential.

## *Session Reproducibles*

### **DISCIPLESHIP**

If you're trying to find different Christian practices to strengthen your faith, then look for some direction at WayToLive.org ([www.waytolive.org](http://www.waytolive.org)). Select different youth characters to hear their stories about life and faith. Or choose topics from the pull-down menu to watch dramas dealing with food, choices, relationships, truth, prayer, and more. Take a friendship inventory quiz or e-mail a video link to your friends or youth pastor to discuss together. This site offers lots of helpful suggestions and is a great place to start a conversation with others about living a life of faith.

### **MENNONITE WORLD**

If you're looking to engage your Mennonite faith more deeply, then scroll over to the Mennonite Church USA Web site ([www.mennoniteusa.org](http://www.mennoniteusa.org)) or Mennonite Church Canada ([www.mennonitechurch.ca](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca)). There you'll find links to news, resources, a directory of all people Mennonite, a calendar of events, information about the next youth convention, and much more. You'll also find links to the weekly magazines *The Mennonite* and the *Mennonite Weekly Review* for all your news and opinions from Mennonites around the world.

If you're interested in chatting about all things Mennonite and beyond, drop by the Third Way Café ([www.thirdway.com](http://www.thirdway.com)) for some refreshment. The site offers lots of opportunities to converse about Mennonite topics and faith in general. They serve daily Scripture readings, devotionals, and articles to comment on. Read other people's insights, and respond to their questions. This is a good site to recommend to friends and family who want to know more about Mennonites and the Christian faith.

### **SERVING THE WORLD**

Interested in volunteering your time and talents? Head to the Mennonite Mission Network to start your decision-making process. There are three main opportunities for youth.

For short-term mission work, check out Youth Venture ([www.mennonitemission.net/Work/Service/YV/Default.asp](http://www.mennonitemission.net/Work/Service/YV/Default.asp)), or for a longer experience there is Service Adventure ([www.mennonitemission.net/Work/Service/SA/Default.asp](http://www.mennonitemission.net/Work/Service/SA/Default.asp)). Both offer opportunities in-country or overseas.

Discover an outreach opportunity for your whole youth group at the DOOR Web site ([www.mennonitemission.net/Work/Service/DOOR/Default.asp](http://www.mennonitemission.net/Work/Service/DOOR/Default.asp)). Lead your group on a weeklong service trip to Denver, Hollywood, or San Antonio, to name a few places. You'll also find plenty of post-high-school service opportunities at the Mennonite Central Committee page ([www.mcc.org](http://www.mcc.org)).

### **COLLEGE CHOICES**

Need help with that big question, "So what are you doing after graduation?"? Link up with the Mennonite Education Association Web site ([www.mennoniteeducation.org](http://www.mennoniteeducation.org)). They have links to all the Mennonite colleges and universities, including a comprehensive list of all the majors and minors available at every school. They also have links to other Mennonite middle and high schools if you're contemplating a transfer from your current locale.

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### **A GREAT YOUTH MAGAZINE**

If you're ever without your paper copy of *With*, have no fear, you can find parts of it online ([www.withonline.org](http://www.withonline.org)). The latest issue is always available. You'll also find a link to Carol's Corner where you can read some extra thoughts from *With*'s editor.

There are many Web sites to help us on our faith journey. Be careful as you surf. Just because a site claims to be Christian doesn't mean it actually is. Always judge a Web site by its content and not its name alone. And no matter where you are chatting online, never give out more personal information than your first name, even if it is a Mennonite site. With these tips and a desire to grow closer to God, the online world can be a helpful companion on the journey of faith.

### **CONNECTING TODAY'S DECISIONS WITH FAITH AND FUTURE**

Trying to figure out how the decisions you make today can affect your future—and how those choices tie into your faith? Check out [www.mmaYnow.com](http://www.mmaYnow.com), a new Web site especially for youth and young adults from MMA (Mennonite Mutual Aid). The new site features articles and stories on stewardship-related topics and a variety of helpful tools and calculators. In addition, the site features an online community (also known as a discussion forum) where you can ask questions, build relationships, and discuss the issues most important to you—in particular those relating to the stewardship of money, talents, health, time, and relationships.