



START THE CONVERSATION

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Sex, Drugs, and Reality TV: What's the Impact of Pop Culture on your Life?
Sponsor Analysis

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES?

Sex and drugs? Aren't these topics too controversial for me or my company to be associated with? In a word, no.

Now is the time for a wide-ranging, frank conversation about the impact of pop culture on our lives. And what better place to do it than a church, with teens, parents, business people, faith leaders and other community members coming together to discuss these issues in an atmosphere of safety, trust and respect.

That is precisely what Marnita's Table is known for doing. We have been hearing from many of the 500 or more teens who come to the Table each year that they would welcome an opportunity to talk with the adults in their lives about how pop culture impacts them.

Where else should we talk about the packaging of hip hop culture for our youth?
As one young woman put it, "they use sex to sell everything from M & M's to cars, and we're not supposed to talk about it?"

Based on our work with teenagers, we know that these three topic areas of sex, drugs, and TV are inter-related. How many pharmaceutical products – ranging from Viagra to the little purple pill – are sold during the reality TV shows that we all watch (come on, admit it! You watch them too.) There's a miracle drug for every problem!

Virtually every show on TV packages sex in one way or another, teaching young people to view themselves as sex objects, instructing 13-year-olds to dress and act like 16-year-olds, and 16-year-olds like..... you get the idea. Like it or not, many teenagers are having sex. A stunning one in four teen girls has a sexually-transmitted disease. Among African-American girls, the number is two in four, with similar proportions in other communities of color.

We must have these conversations, because if we don't, our young people will just get their information somewhere else – from TV and the rest of the media, their friends, and the culture. If we're not willing to speak the truth, we will all live with the consequences.