

TOPIC: THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE

OBJECTIVE: to help the students recognize the power of movies, television and advertising in shaping American culture and influencing opinions.

TEACHERS NOTE: This lesson is in parts; depending on the level of the class, these can be used as parts of one class or as separate classes.

I. ADVERTISING: The Permissible Lie

OBJECTIVE: to help students recognize how advertising tries to manipulate them.

MATERIALS: Copies of current magazines (which you do not mind tearing up.)

Part A

ACTIVITY: Rip out particularly provocative Ads from the magazines. **EXAMPLE:** Calvin Klein, Nike, any cigarette ad, etc. Fold up the product logo so that the students do not know what the product is. Show the ad photos to the students and ask them to tell you what is going on in the photo.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What product do you think this ad is selling? Why?
2. Do you think that this is a successful ad? Why? Why not?
3. What idea other than the product do you think these ads are pushing? (Sex, greed, fantasy, etc.)
4. Do you see yourself in these ads? Why? Why not?
5. How do these ads treat:
 - a. women?
 - b. men?
 - c. Ethnic minorities (African- Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, etc.)?
 - d. older people?
 - e. teenagers?
6. How do these ads play on our insecurities? (Bad breath, body odor, etc.)

Part B

MATERIALS: magazines, oak tag, markers. paper, scissors and glue.

ACTIVITY: Divide the class up into two teams (or more if you have a large class) and give each team the same product. Example: a pen, a piece of paper, a paper clip, etc. (the more boring the better). Have each team design an advertising campaign for their

ADVERTISING *continued*

product complete with slogan and advertisement using the magazines, markers, paper etc., using any style that they want. When they are finished, let each team do their sales presentation. Then discuss the results.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How difficult/easy was your product to sell? Why?
2. How truthful were you about the product? Why? Why not?
3. Who was your target audience? Why?
4. Would you buy your own product? Why? Why not?
5. Would you buy your competitors product? Why? Why not?
6. What do you think NEW and/or IMPROVED on a product meant?
7. Do you think that some products should not be allowed to be advertised?
(Cigarettes, liquor, etc.)
8. Do you think that you will look at advertising differently from now on? Why? Why not?

SUGGESTED READING: 1 Timothy 6:3-10

This is what you are to teach and urge. Anyone who teaches anything different and does not keep to the sound teaching which is that of our Lord Jesus Christ, the doctrine which is in accordance with true religion, is proud and has no understanding, but rather weakness for questioning everything and arguing about words. All that can come of this is jealousy, contention, abuse and evil mistrust; and unending disputes by people who are depraved in mind and deprived of truth, and imagine that religion is a way of making a profit. Religion, of course, does bring large profits, but only to those who are content with what they have. We brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it; but as long as we have food and clothing, we shall be content with that. People who long to be rich are a prey to trial; they get trapped into all sorts of foolish and harmful ambitions which plunge people into ruin and destruction. The love of money is the root of all evils' and there are some who, pursuing it, have wandered away from the faith and so given their souls any number of fatal wounds.

TEACHER OPTION: If it is available to you, use a video camera and tape the students' presentations or let the students tape their own commercials to be used in their presentation. **MATERIALS:** video camera, VCR, and a TV.

MEDIA continued

II. TELEVISION

OBJECTIVE: to help the students recognize the powerful influence, both negative and positive, of television.

Part A

MATERIALS: Blackboard and chalk.

ACTIVITY: Create four columns on the blackboard and label them: TV, SCHOOL, FAMILY and WORK. Ask the students to figure out how many hours per week they spend doing each activity and write them in the appropriate column. Total each column to find out how many hours the class devotes to each.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. As a class, you watch ___ hours of TV per week, what kind of influence do you think that has on you?
2. Do you watch TV when you eat?
3. Do you watch TV when you do your homework?
4. Who do you usually watch TV with?
5. Do you think you are effected by what you watch on TV? How?
6. Do you think other people are effected by what they watch on TV? How?
7. Do you think TV keeps you from talking to your: family, boyfriend/girlfriend, friends?
8. Does TV ever keep you from getting things done? How?
9. Are you aware of the passage of time when you watch TV?
10. If you could watch only one show a week, what would it be?

PART B

ACTIVITY: Have the students first brainstorm all the positive things about TV and all then, the negative things about TV. Write them in two columns on the board.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Which side had the longest list, positive or negative? Why?
2. What can you do to off-set the negative aspects of TV?
3. What can you do to increase the positive aspects of TV?
4. Is there a difference of how different groups are depicted on TV?

5. How do you feel teenagers are depicted on TV?
6. How would you like to be depicted on TV?
7. What is the difference between cable and network TV
8. How much is *too much* TV? Why?

PART C

MATERIALS: TV listing (TV GUIDE, or the newspaper or cable listing)

ACTIVITY: Have the students create a rating system for TV Programs similar to that which is used for the movies (EXAMPLE: PG, R, NC-17, X.) Let them decide their own criteria (violence, sex, bad language, nudity, etc.) If large enough, divide the class into teams and make them the network censors - NBC, ABC, CBS, FOX, TURNER, MTV, etc. If the class is small, make each student a TV Critic for a network. Using the TV listings, give each team or critic the same list of shows to rate. When they are finished, go around the room and let each student or team present their ratings and why.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How difficult was it to rate TV shows? Why?
2. Do you think TV should have ratings?
3. Do you think there are some things that should not be show on TV? Why? Why not?
4. Who owns the airwaves over which TV is sent? (Answer: the public)
5. Does the public (you) have a right to regulate these airwaves?
6. What about cable?
7. Do you think that the Television Industry is capable of creating a rating system for TV shows? Why? Why not?
8. Should the government create a ratings system? Why? Why not?
9. What do you think of the idea to have a block built into some TV sets to prevent them from receiving shows that have been rated "V" for violent.
10. Would you block anything else out? What? Why? Why not?

SUGGESTED READING: 2 Peter: 2:1-3

As there were false prophets in the past history of our people, so you too will have your false teachers, who will insinuate their own disruptive views and, by disowning the Lord who bought them freedom, will bring upon themselves speedy destruction. Many will copy their debauched behavior, and the Way of Truth will be brought in disrepute on their account. In their greed they will try to make a profit out of you with untrue tales. But the judgement made upon them long ago is not idle, and the destruction awaiting them is for ever on the watch.

PART D

TOPIC: TV TALK SHOW

OBJECTIVE: to help student learn to make decisions on what is true about the information that they receive for television.

MATERIALS: index cards.

TEACHERS NOTE: This class format can be used to cover many social topics. Pick one that is most appropriate to your class. **SUGGESTED TOPICS:**

Race Relationships in America

Right to life (Abortion, Euthanasia, The Death Penalty)

Women's Rights

Teens and Sex (Safe sex, Dating, Chastity)

ACTIVITY: Pick a topic and write out two (or more) people with opposing views on the index cards. Pick one student to be the talk show host and two (or if your class is large, more than two) students to be the panel. Give each of the panelists an index card and tell them to react as the character on the card. **EXAMPLE:** Topic: *Race Relationships in America* - Panelists: one student: *White Supremist*, the other student: *Black Muslim*. When picking students, do not pick the obvious - a white student for the *White Supremist* and black student for the *Black Muslim*. Try reversing the roles to help the students empathize with someone else's point of view.

Set up your classroom so that the panelists sit up front facing the rest of the class which will act as the audience and ask questions. Begin class by letting each panelist make a statement of what they believe. Then let the discussion begin. Act as a member of the audience and ask any questions that you do not see the students covering. Let this run for about 15 minutes then bring the class back and discuss what was said.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do you watch many TV talk shows? Which ones?
2. How much of your information about social interaction or current events do you think you get from TV talk shows?
3. How truthful do you feel people are on talk shows? Why? Why not?
4. Do you think these people are paid?
5. Would that (the amount of money) effect how honest you feel that they are being?
6. Would you appear on a TV talk show? Why? Why no?

TEACHER OPTION: If you have access to a video camera, film this class and show it back to the students for their reaction.

WRAP-UP: Close class with a Bible reading which is appropriate to your topic.