

NOISE

STUDY GUIDE

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This study guide is designed to help readers of Noise have a better understanding of media influence outlined in the book. The questions and subsequent discussion will help readers discern the proper applications for media awareness and activism needed in their own homes and families.

In addition to copies of *Noise*, the following additional materials are needed for a *Noise* study session:

- The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraphs 2493–2499, on the use of the Social Communications
- Pope John Paul II’s World Communication statements of 2002 and 2004, available at the Vatican website www.vatican.va (specific web links are provided in questions below).

CHAPTER 1

Am I Nuts, Or Is It Bad Out There?

1. Prior to reading *Noise*, what was your perception or understanding concerning media influence? Did you really think it was as “bad out there” as the first chapter illustrates?
2. What impact do you think the media have on people’s perception of the Church’s teachings, especially on life issues?
3. What is your biggest area of concern in terms of media influence (e.g., the Internet, television violence, media bias, etc.)?
4. Reflect on the life changes the author had to make in order to answer God’s call and use her talents for His will. What similar changes may God be calling you to make in your life?

CHAPTER 2

It's No Big Deal

1. Read and reflect on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraphs 2493-99 on Social Communications. Discuss any points that struck you in a particular way.
2. Where do you see “a rise to certain passivity,” in your own family, community, and society when it comes to the media?
3. Which of the research showing a connection between media influence and the moral decline in society outlined in this chapter surprised you most?
4. Prior to reading this book, did you also feel media influence was “no big deal”?
5. What area of media influence do you see as the “biggest deal” in terms of how the media are impacting your life and family?
6. Since reading *Noise* are you more interested in making changes in your media usage? Discuss some of the things you plan on changing.

CHAPTER 3

Are You Strong Enough?

1. With whom do you most identify in this chapter—those with a weak or a strong identity?
2. How would you describe the identities of those closest to you—i.e., weak or strong—in terms of how they are impacted by the media?
3. How have your own areas of reflection, contemplation, and spiritual growth (as described on page 29) been effected by your media consumption?

CHAPTER 4

The Creation of the Self-Absorbed Blob

1. How has the idea of “self absorption” raised its ugly head in your life and in the lives of those close to you?
2. At times, do you feel that you have no choice but to give in to the self absorption due to pressure from children or to keep up with the Jones’?
3. Did you find the family featured in the *Time* magazine article referenced in this chapter surprising? Do you think they are typical of many families today?
4. Do you make an effort to eat dinner as a family more than once or twice a week with out interference from the phones, televisions, and computers?
5. What impact has media self-absorption had on your family structure and relationships?

CHAPTER 5

The Loss of Reason

1. Can you cite an example of how your thinking process has been numbed by the constant noise and influence of the news and entertainment media?
2. What do you think is the biggest obstacle to you and your family becoming more proactive (rather than merely reactive) when it comes to important decisions and issues?
3. What kind of impact do you think books and films such as *The Da Vinci Code* (and, more recently, *The Golden Compass*) have on a person’s Christian faith or understanding of that faith?

CHAPTER 6

Is it Soup Yet?

1. Do an honest “media reality check” with your family. How much do various media outlets (e.g., television, cell phones, iPods, etc.) interfere with family meals and time together?
2. What rules have you established regarding media usage in the home? Do you enforce them?
3. Have you discussed this issue with your family? If so, what was their response? If not, why not?
4. How do you see this issue impacting other families in your church and community?

CHAPTER 7

The Inmates are Running the Asylum

1. Read John Paul II’s 2004 World Communications Day message, “The Media and the Family: A Risk and a Richness.” Available at the Vatican website: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/communications/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20040124_world-communications-day_en.html
2. What do you find most challenging about the changes that may need to be made in your home?
3. In this document, John Paul II stresses the importance of parents confronting media awareness in the home and in the world. Have you thought about getting involved in a media activist group or challenging the media on your own? (If you have done so, share your experience with the group.)
4. Do you agree with the assessment in this chapter that many parents have issues with disciplining their children and saying “no” in the area of media usage?

CHAPTER 8

Television: A Vast Wasteland

1. What was your reaction to the research outlined in the book that demonstrates the powerful impact television viewing has on so many areas of our lives, especially the impact it has on children?
2. What area of television influence has you most concerned? Why?
3. Has the evidence convinced you to make changes in your family's TV viewing habits?
4. Discuss some of the challenges presented by the Action Items given at the end of this chapter?

CHAPTER 9

Radio: Trashy Airwaves Coming to a Town Near You

1. What type of radio programs do your children listen to?
2. Do your favorite radio programs and/or stations offer wholesome entertainment that affirms your values?
3. What are your thoughts on John Paul II's assessment about the power of radio to evangelize.
4. Do you regularly listen to Catholic and other Christian radio outlets? If so, have you thought about financially supporting their efforts?

CHAPTER 10

The Internet: Connected to Techo Trouble

1. Read John Paul II's World Communications Day 2002 statement "The Internet Forum for Evangelization."
2. Do you agree with John Paul that the Internet, while a great tool, can contribute to moral relativism?
3. What do you find most helpful about the Internet, especially in terms of communicating with others and in learning more about your faith?
4. Discuss some of the challenges you face in your own life with the Internet.
5. How many computers with Internet connections do you have in your home? Do you monitor the Internet usage of your children? If so, discuss some of the ways you do this. Are you concerned about the influence of such web sites as MySpace and Facebook?

CHAPTER 11

Music and Music Videos: Cranial Pollution and the Cerebral Arcade

1. How do you see popular music impacting the lives of young people today? What influence do think music videos have on kids and society as a whole?
2. Who are your teens' favorite music artists? Are the lyrics age-appropriate and kid friendly? How can you find out if a particular artist is appropriate for your teens to be listening to?
3. Discuss some of the ways you can determine whether a particular artist or CD is appropriate for your teens to be listening to?

CHAPTER 12

Advertising:

Paying For Propaganda

1. Discuss personal pressures you have experienced as a result of advertising. Do the media, for example, make you feel as if you have to look a certain way or buy a certain product in order to be accepted?
2. What types of pressures do you face as a parent regarding the heavy marketing and advertising aimed at children, especially with regards to young people being targeted by tobacco and alcohol companies?
3. What are your thoughts on the way women are portrayed in advertising and marketing?
4. What kind of messages do you think the advertising industry is sending about sex?

CHAPTER 13

Media Bias:

All the News That's Fit To Twist

1. What was your reaction in reading about the amount of evidence supporting a liberal bias in today's news media?
2. What are you most concerned with it terms of media bias and its influence?
3. Have you ever contacted a news media outlet? What were the results?
4. How do you feel about writing letters to the editor or engaging the news media as this chapter's Action Items list suggests?

CHAPTER 14

The Stranger in Your Home

1. What was your reaction to the “stranger in your home” story?
2. Could you see your own family in the scenes described?
3. Do you take advantage of the monitoring tools available to help protect your family such as TiVo, TV ratings, etc?

CHAPTER 15

Becoming a Media-Savvy Family

1. What is your reaction to the mom who believes her family is not being impacted by the media because they no longer have a television?
2. What are you doing to make your family media savvy?
3. Do you think the average family or lay person can really have an impact on the media? Why or why not?
4. Are you willing to step out of your comfort zone to make a difference in the culture?