



## **Our Thoughts on “13 Reasons Why” and Other Resources**

### **“13 Reasons Why”**

The Netflix show “13 Reasons Why” is creating a lot of buzz among the news, but even more among teenagers. Many junior high and high school students are watching this show, but most, if not all, are talking about it or hearing it talked about in the halls of their schools. This is the most popular show currently available, and the most talked about Netflix show ever created with over 11 million tweets since it was released a little over a month ago. Many of you have probably seen news articles or heard about this show, but I will give you a brief synopsis.

The show is about a high school girl named Hannah who commits suicide and distributes thirteen cassette tapes to thirteen different people describing why each individual was one of the reasons she decided to take her life. Each episode focuses on one individual and the reason they contributed to her hurt. It is based off a book by the same title written by Jay Asher in 2007. The show takes much more creative liberty and visually depicts scenes and scenarios the book merely alludes to. The directors and producers intentionally left the camera on inappropriate scenes to make the viewer “uncomfortable” and to “feel the weight” of the actions that led to Hannah’s decision. Not only is there heavy content on the issue of suicide and self harm, in the final three episodes there are two very graphic rape scenes and a long scene depicting in detail how she took her life by slitting her wrists. The show glamorizes suicide and makes Hannah look like a courageous hero, but in reality she blames others for her death and sees suicide as the only option.

I tell you all this to make you aware of the content in the show if you are not already aware. Due to the very mature content and glamorizing message of suicide, we would strongly suggest your students not view this show if they have not already. More than caution, we want to help equip you with how to engage your kids in a conversation about this show and the topic of cutting and suicide.

### **Discipleship**

Here is what we know, God has placed you – mom and dad – in your children’s lives to love them, shepherd them, guide them, tell them of the goodness and promises of God, walk with them through their hurt, and help them know and walk in the truth of the Gospel (Deuteronomy 6). Our culture, because of the enemy, tries to influence our kids and make them believe lies about themselves and others that are completely contradictory to what God has revealed in Scripture (1 Peter 5:8-9). We must do everything we can to remind students of who God is, how great is His love for them, and how they can believe the promises of God and walk in intimate relationship with them. We must engage with them and point them to truth.

So regardless of the topic or issue, but especially this one we want to encourage you to:

- **Talk with your kids**
- **Point them to God’s Word**  
*2 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 4:12, Philippians 4:8, Psalm 119:9-16*
- **Listen to what they are talking about with your friends**
- **Be available and approachable**



**Questions to ask your kids on the topic of “13 Reasons Why”, suicide, and cutting:**

- Have you seen this show? If so, what did it make you think/feel?
- Are these conversations you and your friends are having – 13 Reasons, cutting, suicide?
- Have you ever been tempted to self-harm or other thoughts? If so, what did you do with those thoughts? Who did you process with?
- What are shows on Netflix or any media that you think is worth or not worth putting in your mind? How do you process that? How can we as parents help you process that?
- Do you feel that we (your parents) are a safe place to ask questions and process? What are ways that we can make it more inviting for you to come to us with questions, hurts, temptation, etc. and not just process other places?

We are praying for you as you engage in conversations to combat the lies of the enemy with the truth found in Scripture. John 13:34-35 calls us to love one another because Christ has loved us. And because of the love of Jesus we can be a light to others in this hurting and broken world as the expression of God’s love. We want to come alongside you as the Church and help in any way we can.

**Other Resources:**

- Focus on the Family – [“Why We Don’t Think Teens Should Watch 13 Reasons Why”](#)
- Russell Moore’s Article – [“Does ‘13 Reasons Why’ Glamorize Teen Suicide?”](#)
- Wake Message on 13 Reasons Why – [“13 Reasons Why You Matter”](#)
- A School’s Response and Action – [13 Reasons Why Not](#)
- For those struggling with Self-Harm - [ReGen Self-Harm Guide](#)

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