



## PARTNERING WITH PARENTS

# *Talk with your kids about advertising*

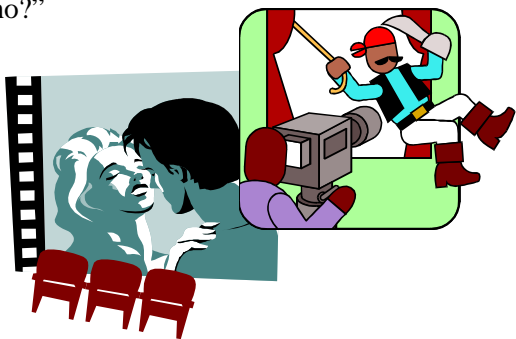
The media knows how to influence your children and they're good at it. Some facts from recent studies:

- “Tweenagers” (ages 8 to 12) remember the ads they see on TV more than any other commercial medium. Almost half of all tweenagers say they watch American Idol, and almost two-thirds (61 percent), say they remember the commercials they saw during the show.
- Almost 72 percent of kids in this age group said when they see their favorite celebrity using a brand-name product, they want to use the same brand.

(Source: Buzzback Market Research & Group Magazine)

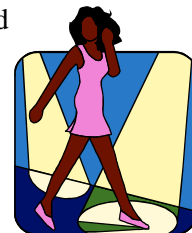
We don't have to tell you that TV has a big hold on our kids. We just want to encourage you to discuss some of the ads you might see with them. Your opinions and open communication can help them recognize the negative side of our consumer culture. Ask them some questions like these:

- Do the people in this ad seem to have a more exciting life than us?
- Are the people putting each other down? Are they using competition to make their product look better?
- What kind of negative message might also be included in this ad?
- Does it reinforce traditional gender roles, such as “girls are pretty and sweet” and “boys are more macho?”



Point out the strategies that advertisers use:

- Advertisers are aggressive about selling things to kids.
- They set us up to feel disappointed about our lives. They want us to feel that there's always something more we need.
- They want us to feel that wearing a certain brand name will make us feel happier and more accepted.
- Fashion and trends are always changing so that we must constantly spend more on new products.
- Ads stress competition and status instead of making people feel good about themselves or about accepting others as they are.



Some other ideas:

- Encourage your children to “talk back” to advertisers when they see something negative. Help them write a letter saying “I won't buy this product because...”
- They could write a letter to the newspaper editor or they could encourage their classmates to create a class letter or project. Organize a media day in school and ask students not to buy anything on that day and not to wear clothing with a brand name logo.
- Visit the website [www.media-awareness.ca](http://www.media-awareness.ca) for more ideas.

Note: This is one of an occasional series of articles designed to give parents some helpful information on values and faith issues. We want to be partners with you in providing religious education for our young parish members. If you'd like more information, contact Rita Zyber, Middle School Religious Education Director (821-2133 or [rzyber@stfrancisa2.org](mailto:rzyber@stfrancisa2.org)).