

Praying for Students and Schools

The following content is “Day 4” from the recently released prayer guide *Reclaim a Generation: 21 Days of Prayer for Schools*. It is designed for individuals and churches to use to pray for students and schools, especially as students are going back to school in August/September. See below for order information.

EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

“. . . casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7, ESV)

“Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.” (3 John 1:2, NIV)

According to the National Institutes of Health, nearly one third of all adolescents ages 13 to 18 will experience an anxiety disorder, and these numbers have been rising steadily. While there are a number of factors that are likely contributing to student anxiety, one that stands out as particularly noteworthy is the increased influence of social media.

Today’s children and teens are connected constantly to social media and are being bombarded by all kinds of negative messaging. The resulting anxiety has been undeniable. While it is a great way to communicate through distance, take attractive photos, and stay in touch with loved ones, its abuse is rampant.

Social media platforms are frequently cesspools of bullying, comparison, provocation, and darkness. Studies show that

social media does more harm than good—it's not good for anyone's mental or emotional health. It lowers self-esteem, encourages comparison, and paints an unrealistic picture of reality.

We must pray against all the ways social media tells our youth that they are not good enough. Our children must know their worth is unquestionable, despite the messages they are receiving from social media. We must pray against the ways these platforms have destroyed their self-esteem, and ask that God renews their mental and emotional well-being with His divine presence in their lives.

Let's Pray

- Lord, we pray for the emotional and mental well-being of our students, knowing that every day they face pressures from others, as well as from what they see online, in the news, or on their smart phone.
- We ask that any messages that inspire fear or lower their self-esteem and their self-worth be replaced with Your unceasing acceptance of them and love for them. May they always know that their worth is unchanging! They are special, with an original design and plan for their life!
- We pray against all the ways social media can be a toxic weapon in the lives of our children and teens. We pray against the spirits of comparison, jealousy, and greed that have robbed them of their youth and innocence. We pray against the ways cyber bullying and mean-spirited online interactions have allowed fear, inadequacy, isolation, and rejection to fester.
- In Jesus' name, we declare that the mental and emotional well-being of our students will not be defined by what others say about them, nor will it be defined by what they think of themselves! We declare contentment, confidence, self-love, generosity, kindness, and joy

over the lives of today's youth. We ask that students have the boldness to step away from social media when they know it is harmful, even when it is not the popular choice to do so.

–CHERYL SACKS is a best-selling author, national conference speaker, prayer mobilizer, and church prayer consultant. Her “Prayer-Saturated” series—including *The Prayer-Saturated Church* (NavPress/Tyndale), *Prayer-Saturated Kids* (NavPress/Tyndale), and *The Prayer-Saturated Family* (Chosen)—have blessed and mentored tens of thousands of individuals to go deeper into prayer, and have greatly impacted thousands of churches.