



A CVE Scotland review of the *Adolescence* national conversation and its viewing in Scottish Schools

An Abstract

The Netflix adolescence TV series has been made available for secondary schools in Scotland to show in class; however, the decision on its use will be left to local authorities and individual schools. Resources to support classroom discussion are being developed by Tender, the healthy relationship charity, but they are not currently available.

The series highlights issues such as misogyny, online dangers, and underage sexual activity. It contains frequent profanity and addresses topics of a mature nature; therefore, it is recommended that parents watch it in advance to determine its suitability for their child.

For teachers, it serves as a reminder to be vigilant, supportive figures who model godly values and identify struggling students. For parents, it's a sobering push to monitor online activity, build trust, and discuss faith-based responses to anger or rejection.

It is unlikely that you have been able to avoid the discussion and debate over the TV programme ***Adolescence*** in the press and social media. Released in the UK on 13 March, *Adolescence* is a four-part Netflix fictional series that follows the harrowing aftermath of a 13-year-old boy, Jamie Miller, arrested for murdering a female classmate, Katie, in a northern English town.

Each episode, shot in a single continuous take, unfolds in real time, immersing viewers in the emotional and psychological toll on Jamie's family, school, and community. It has gained critical acclaim for how it tackles social issues of misogyny, dangers of online radicalisation and the importance of healthy relationships. It has also been praised for its writing, cinematography

and directing.

The series has sparked national conversations, with some advocating for its screening in schools to address misogyny and online safety, while others question its suitability for young audiences due to its TV-MA rating and graphic content. It has introduced a term to many parents and teachers; '*incel*' - involuntary celibate culture. It has raised concerns for some Christian parents due to the themes of violence and social media influence.

What sets *Adolescence* apart from any other paid-for-TV series is the political comment and national conversation it has generated; so much so that the Prime Minister, Kier Starmer, backed calls for it be made free to view in all secondary schools across the country through the Into Film+ schools streaming service. However, it should be noted what individual schools show in classes from Into Film+ is not under the provision of the Scottish or UK governments. It is likely that a decision to show the series in classrooms will be up to individual schools and teachers, made in collaboration with their local authority. At time of writing, there are no Government issued educational guidelines on how to lead discussion or provide support either before or after watching. Netflix has announced that they intend to have healthy relationship charity **Tender** write resources for schools to use. <https://tender.org.uk/>

A Scottish Government spokesperson said, "We welcome the move to make *Adolescence* available to show pupils in Scottish schools. Whilst we are actively taking steps to tackle gender-based violence in schools, it is important to be clear the increase in violence towards women across society will only be resolved when men and boys tackle problematic behaviour. In January, a Ministerial Online Safety Taskforce was launched to focus on addressing the risk of online harm to children and young people, and identify what more can be done to protect them. The Scottish Government also supports the Digital Discourse Initiative which provides teachers and educators in Scotland with tools to counter the effects of online hate and disinformation, and teach core media literacy skills."

Summary of Adolescence with relevant themes: For Christian teachers and parents

The series begins with Jamie's arrest, shocking his parents, Eddie and Manda, who are loving but unaware of his inner struggles. The narrative explores Jamie's motivations, revealing his exposure to toxic online "manosphere" culture, including misogynistic influencers like Andrew Tate, which fuels his insecurities and rage. Through perspectives of his family, detectives, schoolmates, and a psychologist, the show examines how societal pressures, cyberbullying, and isolation contribute to his actions. It's less about the crime itself and more about why a seemingly "normal" teen could commit such an act.

Key Themes:

Parenting and Presence: The series underscores the importance of knowing your child's world, especially online. Jamie's parents, though well-meaning, miss signs of his radicalisation, prompting reflection on attentive, communicative parenting. For Christian parents, this aligns with Proverbs 22:6 - training a child in the way they should go - emphasising guidance and connection.

Moral Accountability: It raises questions about responsibility - not just Jamie's, but also parents, educators, and society. Christian viewers might see parallels to teachings on stewardship and community, like Galatians 6:2, bearing one another's burdens.

Toxic Influences and Worldview: The show critiques how social media can distort young minds, particularly boys, with harmful ideologies. For teachers, it's a call to foster critical thinking and Christ-centred identity (Romans 12:2, not conforming to the world).

Redemption and Hope: While dark, the series isn't hopeless. It suggests that one caring adult - a parent, teacher, or mentor - can make a difference, resonating with Christian compassion and the belief in transformation through love and truth.

Content Considerations: The series contains mature themes (teen violence, misogyny, cyberbullying), brief CCTV footage of a stabbing, and frequent profanity ("f--k," "s--t"). References to teen sexuality and non-consensual photo sharing may concern parents. However, violence is mostly implied, not graphic, and the focus is emotional impact, not sensationalism. There is graphic discussion in Episode 3 - where Jamie has an intensive session with a therapist - as to the level of sexual activity a 'typical' 13 year old may find 'reasonable' to engage in. For this reason, it is recommended that parents watch this in advance to determine whether it is suitable for their own child to view.

Takeaways for Christian Audiences:

For teachers, it's a reminder to be vigilant, supportive figures who model godly values and spot struggling students. For parents, it's a sobering push to monitor online activity, build trust, and discuss faith-based responses to anger or rejection.

The show doesn't provide easy answers but sparks vital conversations about raising teens in a digital age. *Adolescence* can be used as a vehicle to discuss Christian values: use the series to explore Christian principles such as love, respect, forgiveness, and community. For instance, discuss how Jamie's actions contrast with biblical teachings on loving one's neighbour (Mark 12:31) and the importance of guarding one's heart (Proverbs 4:23).

It can also be used to share God's desire for loving sexual relationships to be within the bonds of marriage. Christian Values in Education RSHP resources may be helpful to refer as well as those of other Christian organisations (<https://cve-scotland.org.uk/resources/cve-scotlands-rshp-resources/>)

OTHER SOURCES OF REFERENCE

This intense, thought-provoking drama may be tough to watch but offers valuable insights for those guiding young people with faith and care. For further reading and prayerful consideration, we recommend the following articles: -

Association of Christian Teachers – An English Teacher unpacks Adolescence.

Amy, a secondary school teacher and ACT member from the North of England, reflects on the hit Netflix series *Adolescence* and asks: how should Christians respond to this powerful cultural moment?

<https://www.christian-teachers.org.uk/blog/an-english-teacher-unpacks-adolescence>

Evangelical Alliance – Adolescence: Is the crisis of masculinity leading young men to Christ?

Could the crisis of masculinity in culture, explored in *Adolescence*, be playing a role in young men turning to Christ? By Katherine Brown

<https://www.eauk.org/news-and-views/adolescence-is-the-crisis-of-masculinity-leading-young-men-to-christ>

Premier Christianity - Netflix's Adolescence is a national wake up call. Young people are in crisis and the Church must help

The new TV drama tackles the murder of a schoolgirl and her classmate's arrest. It doesn't shy away from all the hard topics: toxic masculinity, gender wars, online bullying and a struggling education system. Christians should watch it now, says Krish Kandiah

<https://www.premierchristianity.com/reviews/netflixs-adolescence-is-a-national-wake-up-call-young-people-are-in-crisis-and-the-church-must-help/19117.article>

Christianity Today – What Netflix's Adolescence teaches us about faith and the need for a digital detox

The new hit Netflix series, *Adolescence*, confronts this reality head-on, exposing the dangerous consequences of unchecked online influence, and offering a timely reminder of why a digital detox can be essential to strengthening our faith. By Obianuju Mbah

<https://www.christiantoday.com/news/what-netflixs-adolescence-teaches-us-about-faith-and-the-need-for-a-digital-detox>

Services for Education – 'Adolescence' The Netflix Series – What Does it Tell Us and How Can We Respond

Education Adviser, Jo Perrin, discusses the new Netflix series *Adolescence*, delving into what it tells us as education professionals and how we can respond.

<https://www.servicesforeducation.co.uk/blog/safeguarding/adolescence-what-does-it-tell-us-and-how-can-we-respond/>

NexGen - The new Netflix series Adolescence raises difficult but essential issues for Christian parents to grapple with

Drawing on the psychological research for her PhD Sara Taylor considers what Christian parents should think about as they watch this most tense of dramas

[The new Netflix series Adolescence raises difficult but essential issues for Christian parents to grapple with | Article | NexGen](#)

WEBSITE SUPPORT LINKS

Below are a few good safeguarding advice/resources/research and how to spot it in your young people. SU Scotland also provide advice on social media and internet safety and Transforming Lives for Good on how to mentor children and young people.

<https://safeguarding.network/content/responding-to-the-incel-ideology>

<https://childhub.org/en/child-protection-news/safeguarding-be-vigilant-signs-incel-culture>

<https://communityjustice.scot/blogs/new-research-could-help-prevent-young-men-being-radicalised-by-online-misogyny/>

<https://www.zerotolerance.org.uk/resources/Many-Good-Men.pdf>

<https://www.youthlink.scot/policy-influence/research/youth-led-research/imagine-a-man/>