

CPYU's Ad Filtering Questions for Super Bowl LIII

by Walt Mueller



The Simple Seven

1. What product is this ad selling?
2. What, besides the product, does this ad sell? (ideas, lifestyle, worldview, behaviors, etc.)
3. What's the bait, hook, and promise?
4. Complete this sentence: "This ad tells me, use _____ (the name of the product) and _____ (the result the ad promises).
5. Does the ad tell the truth? What? How?
6. Does the ad tell a lie(s)? What? How?
7. How does this ad and its messages agree or disagree with God's truth and what does that mean for me?

Does marketing work? You bet! If it didn't work, then why are companies willing to fork out \$5 million for a 30-second commercial spot during this year's Super Bowl? If you're one of those parents or youth workers who plan on shutting off the commercials during the Super Bowl, let me ask you one question: Why? Why not make your Super Bowl viewing experience productive for you and your kids? I want to challenge you to see it as an opportunity to teach how to apply their faith to the glut of marketing messages they face each and every day, by helping them think critically and Christianly about this year's Super Bowl ads.

No doubt, the Super Bowl commercial debuts have become an event in and of themselves. Why not take the time to filter this year's ads through the following questions? Or, access the ads on YouTube so that you can watch and talk about them after the game. At the very least, sit with your kids and filter the ads through "The Simple Seven" questions we've included in the side bar. If you want to go deeper, use the additional ad filtering questions.

Here's an additional suggestion just for all you youthworkers: Build next week's youth group meeting around the Super Bowl ads. Divide up into groups. Give each group one ad to process through "The Simple Seven" and the additional ad filtering questions. Come back together and have each group report on what they learned. It's a great way to get them to think consciously and critically about marketing, and to get them to see how God's Word applies to all of life!

Additional Questions

- Who made this ad?
- Why was this ad made?
- Who is this ad targeting?
- What do the makers of this ad want me to do?
- What's the plot?
- What are the ad's themes and assumptions?
- What techniques are being used to sell the product?
- What does the camera say is most important? How are lighting, angles, focus, close-ups, etc. used?
- How is the camera used to manipulate my emotions and create moods?
- How is music used to manipulate my emotions and create moods?
- How are the camera and music used to manipulate and distort reality?
- What longing/need does this product promise to fulfill?
- How are people treated and portrayed? Men? Women? Children? Parents? Authority figures? Etc.
- If you use this product, what does the ad explicitly or implicitly say your life will be like?
- If you don't use this product, what does the ad explicitly or implicitly say your life will be like?
- What inadequacies, anxieties, and aspirations does the ad exploit?
- Who/what is the redeemer/messiah in this ad?
- Is this ad exploitive or manipulative? How?
- What role do you think this ad plays in shaping the lives of your peers?
- Is this product necessary? Why? Why not?
- How does this ad try to make me need the product?