

# **ST. ANN PARISH**

## **CATECHESIS**



## **FAMILY HANDBOOK**

### **2025-2026**

**GRADE 1– CONFIRMATION**

**24500 S. NAVAJO DRIVE**

**CHANNAHON, IL 60410**

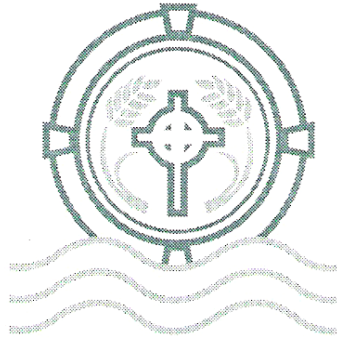
**815-467-6962**

**PASTOR — FR. JOHN KLEIN**

**DIRECTOR OF FORMATION — TOM URASKI**

**FORMATION ASSISTANT — ROSEMARY MORALES**

# *St. Ann Parish*



*Town Center  
24500 S. Navajo Drive  
Channahon, Illinois 60410  
815-467-6962*

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Dear Parent or Guardian,

Welcome to the 2025-26 RE year! Parents are the primary catechists in a child's life. Please feel free to contact me if there is anything we can do to help you with your child's formation. We are all in this together!

To assist you in understanding the goals and objectives of St. Ann Catechetical Program this booklet has been prepared for you.

Our catechetical sessions center around the building of a Eucharistic community of God. In the 1 1/4 hours we have each week with your child/children, our catechists do their utmost to impart Catholic doctrine, tradition, heritage and moral living principles. We strive to enhance the faith formation of your child in a caring, sharing and loving environment.

At home, please take the time to pray together as a family, first and foremost at Mass, and any other time of day. Review with your child the topics discussed in their sessions by going over the textbook with them. Share your faith with your children. You are the example they will follow, we are just here to supplement what happens at home.

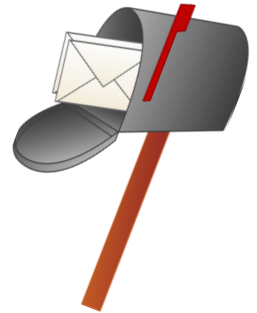
I am excited to share this year of formation with your family, and encourage you to continue your own journey of faith as an adult! Please feel free to get involved. We can use the help of the entire community. Also, please encourage your children to attend retreats. This is a great and fun way to help your children grow in their faith.

If there are any questions, concerns, or ideas please do not hesitate to call me at 815-467-6962, ext. 5.

Sincerely in Christ,

Tom Uraski

St. Ann Parish Catechetical Leader



## HOW TO REACH US

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24500 S. Navajo Dr.  
Channahon, IL 60410

Phone: Tom Uraski 815-467-6962 ext. 5  
Rosemary 815-467-6962 ext. 9  
Fax 815-467-2320

Website: [www.stannchannahon.org](http://www.stannchannahon.org)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/stannchannahon](https://facebook.com/stannchannahon)  
Instagram: [Instagram.com/stannchannahon](https://Instagram.com/stannchannahon)  
YouTube: [St.AnnCatholicChurchMedia](https://St.AnnCatholicChurchMedia)

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Youth Ministry [tom@stannchannahon.org](mailto:tom@stannchannahon.org)  
Parish Office [parishoffice@stannchannahon.org](mailto:parishoffice@stannchannahon.org)

The parish office is open daily from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for the parish secretary to assist you.  
To be assured of visiting with the Pastor or a parish staff member, appointments are suggested.

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## **ST. ANN PARISH**

### **PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGIOUS FORMATION**

The philosophy of religious formation underlying the activities of the Religious Formation Office of St. Ann Parish is based on two key principles:

1. Religious Formation is a continuing process which strives to develop in each Catholic Christian a mature and enlightened faith; and
2. Religious Formation has a fourfold mission; to teach the message of Jesus; to build community, to celebrate faith life, and to be of service to others.

The Catholic Church teaches us that parents have the primary responsibility for the formation of their children. Therefore, our children's program is built on the premise that the best formation of children will come about through the spiritual growth of their parent(s) or guardian(s) and other teachers. We see our program as only the partner and supporter of the parent or guardian in carrying out the task of the religious education of their children.

St. Ann's Religious Formation Office seeks to meet the children where they are and draw them gradually, according to their own development, into a deeper understanding and experience of their own faith. We try to help our students to become "doers of the Word, and not hearers only." To bring this about we strive to weave religion lessons around some concrete experience which will help bring the lesson from the realm of theory into the realm of the real.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- I. To proclaim the MESSAGE of Christ Jesus.
  - A. To teach faithfully the principle elements of the Catholic Christian message for catechesis
    1. Revelation
    2. Trinity
    3. Jesus Christ
    4. The Church
    5. Morality
    6. Sacraments
    7. The Kingdom of God
    8. Mary and the Saints
    9. Catholic Social Teaching

- B. To assist the students in understanding and remembering the common prayer formulas of the Church, the ten commandments, the laws of the Church, the Sacraments.

II. To provide students with experiences of Catholic worship.

- A. To celebrate together the principle events of the liturgical year.
- B. To promote participation in personal prayer and weekly communal worship.

III. To foster Christian Community.

- A. To provide opportunities for students to share their faith.
- B. To activate Christian concern for issues of life, truth and justice.

Our text series, “Alive in Christ,” provides learners with accurate and comprehensive content based on *Scripture* and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, as well as a teaching methods that help catechists effectively communicate the content to children.

## **PROGRAM POLICIES**

### **COMMUNICATION**

Our main sources of communication to families is through the student folder, Constant Contact email, REMIND app, weekly bulletin, and the parish website ([www.stannchannahon.org](http://www.stannchannahon.org)). When signing ups for REMIND, please sign up for our Religious Ed general code (@stannre) **and** your child’s (ren) classroom code. REMIND is the quickest way for us to send out important information via text to families in real time. Information will be sent home at the beginning of the year for you to sign up to get our texts. Families should be diligent in reading the folder, emails and the bulletin, as they will contain important information and dates.

#### ***REMIND CODES for Grades 1st — 8th***

Grade 1: @stannre1	Grade 5: @stannre5
Grade 2: @stannre2	Grade 6: @stannre6
Grade 3: @stannre3	Grade 7 (Year I): @stannyear1
Grade 4: @stannre4	Grade 8 (Year II): @stannyear2

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Parent(s) are expected to review what children have learned in catechetical sessions, work with them to learn the assigned prayers to be mastered for their grade level, and assist with any assigned homework. Other on line resources for parents that correspond to the textbook are available at <https://www.oursundayvisitorcurriculum.com> , on our website <https://www.stannchannahon.org> or <https://aliveinchrist.osv.com/family>

## **RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENTS**

The Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are received in 2nd grade. The Sacrament of Confirmation is received during the early spring of 8th grade. Each student must have been enrolled in a catechetical program prior to the year of preparation. 1 year for 2nd grade, 2 years for Confirmation. Assessments may be required for entrance. Parents will be required to attend preparation sessions for each Sacrament, as well as participate in some home based catechesis.

## **SCHEDULE**

Catechetical Sessions will be held at St. Ann Parish according to the following schedule:

### **SESSION A**

Wednesday	4:00 p.m. — 5:15 p.m.	Grades 1-6
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### **SESSION B**

Wednesday	6:00 p.m. — 7:15 p.m.	Grades 1-6
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### **SESSION C**

Thursday	5:00 p.m. — 6:15 p.m.	Grades 1-6
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### **Confirmation Prep Year I and Year II**

Sunday	10:00 a.m. Mass — 1:00 p.m.	Grades 7-8
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## **ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE**

For Confirmation Prep ONLY, the Diocese has a strict NO MORE THAN THREE (3) ABSENCES PER YEAR policy. Inconsistent attendance will put your child's grade-level completion in doubt and jeopardize your child's ability to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation with their classmates. Each Confirmation Prep absence will have make up work to complete.

## **CONTINUITY**

It is expected that students will faithfully attend each grade level (1-8) as part of their religious formation. Grades 1 and 2 are required to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist and grades 7 and 8 are required for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

## **CONDUCT**

The time children have for formal catechesis is a precious commodity. Therefore, we request that the parent(s) make their children aware that good moral conduct and courteous behavior is expected toward their catechists and fellow students. Disrespect to classmates, catechists, or other adults involved in our program can not be tolerated.

The hall way is designated as a time out area. After an oral warning, children with discipline problems will be removed from a classroom and be supervised by a hall monitor. These children could be given an assignment related to the session. In the event of a 3 consistent time outs, notification of the behavior will be given to the parent. No change in behavior will result in calling the parents for a meeting with the pastor. Parents, may be requested to attend catechetical sessions if the behavior problem does not get resolved.

## **CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONICS**

No cell phones or electronic devices are allowed during sessions. If a student is found with such a device it will be confiscated and returned to the parent at the end of the session.

## **STUDENT TEXT BOOKS**

Each student receives a religion textbook and folder to keep and use at class and at home. Parent(s) or guardian(s) should remind their child/children to bring the textbook and folder to class. It is the responsibility of the parent(s) or guardian(s) to replace any lost books. Replacement books can be ordered through the Religious Education Department.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSING**

In the event of severe weather we will text status of R.E. classes on the REMIND app. This will be the best way to keep informed of all emergency closings.

## **CHRISTIAN LIVING JOURNAL**

All students in Year I and Year II Confirmation Preparation are required to complete Christian Living Journals, one per year, by the date indicated on the provided Christian Living Journal. Some activities will be made available through the Religious Education Department. Reflection questions must be answered for each event. If you are unsure of an activity's qualification for a credit, please ask one of your catechists or see Tom. We encourage all students in all grades to participate in serving others.



## **PARKING LOT ETIQUETTE**

The flow of traffic around the church will be one way. As always, our first priority is to keep your children safe before, during and after sessions. Please help us insure their safety by following the procedures.

## **DROP OFF**

- ⇒ **Wednesday and Thursday:** Students must be dropped off at Door #4 of the church, by the parish hall. Traffic is to remain in single file. Do not let your children out of the car before reaching the entry way. Please remain in line, do not pass the cars ahead of you.
- ⇒ **Sunday:** Class starts with 10 a.m. Mass. Students can attend alone or preferably with their families. No student will be allowed in the parish hall prior to the end of Mass.

## **PICK UP**

- ⇒ **Wednesday and Thursday:** When picking up your children, you must park on the west side of the church and enter through the Door #5. All other doors will remain locked. Your children will be waiting for you in designated areas in the Gathering Area with the catechist. You must enter the building, retrieve your child from the catechist and escort them back to your car. No child will be allowed out of the building unless the adult responsible for driving them home accompanies them. Out of courtesy for our volunteers, please arrive early for pick up!
- ⇒ **Sunday:** Pick up is at Door #1

## **WALKERS AND BIKE RIDERS**

If you live in a nearby neighborhood and desire your children to walk or ride their bike home from church, please fill out the Walkers Permission Slip enclosed in your packet. We will not release your children from the building unless a form is on file.

**St. Ann,  
Our Patron Saint  
Pray for Us!**



# Drop Off and Pick Up Instructions for Grades 1-8

## Keep The Children SAFE!

Please use the following map to understand how the drop off and pick up of children should happen. Without a system there is more danger of an accident. For the safety of all, we ask you abide by the system.

The ONLY exception will be children who have written parental permission to walk to nearby neighborhoods.

For Grades 1-6 pick-up, all doors **except** #5 will be locked to the outside. Parents must come in the building to pick up your children. We cannot release children without a parent present.

For Confirmation Prep pick-up,  
students will be released from Door #1.

Thank you for the inconvenience of parking and walking,  
and understanding that any accident could cause  
extreme pain to our parish families..

# Drive Safely At All Times!

# Diocese of Joliet

## Safe

## Environment

## Parent

## Pages

The Diocese of Joliet requires Parish RE Programs to distribute the following informational pages to all families. Although you may have seen this information before, please review the contents and have an open line of communication with your child concerning these issues.

# Diocese of Joliet Safe Environment Parent Pages



## Practical Advice for Parents On Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

A Resource Provided to You Through the Protecting God's Children® Program



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Parenting is the most influential responsibility an adult undertakes in life. It is also the one job for which adults receive the least amount of training. Society expects parents to know what to do, to always take appropriate actions, and to behave daily in a manner that provides a wonderful role model for their children. However, society does not provide parents the tools and skills they need to live up to these expectations. The National Catholic Risk Retention Group, Inc., provides parents with this free handbook to help them focus on practical steps designed to help protect children from sexual abuse. This handbook was produced for our Protecting God's Children program as a part of our VIRTUS® programs.

The first step to protecting children from sexual abuse is educating parents about the nature of the problem. Awareness about child sexual abuse—what it is and who commits it—opens the door to some simple steps parents can take to protect children. No one has more at stake or a more vested interest in protecting children than the people who gave them life. Awareness, education, and responsible parenting give a child the best tools for her or his defense—and the child may be more likely to tell an adult if something happens.

The Protecting God's Children program is designed for adults in our faith community—to raise their awareness about the nature of child sexual abuse, to educate them on how to recognize the warning signs, and to train them about what to do when they suspect a child is being victimized. The program includes awareness sessions, videos, web-based training modules, online training bulletins, and other programs specifically designed to assist parents and other adults.

The first of two centerpiece videos, *A Time to Protect God's Children*, presents an accurate, clear, and effective introduction to the subject of child sexual abuse. Awareness usually gives rise to the question: "What can I do?" The second video, *A Plan to Protect God's Children*, trains adults to recognize some of the primary symptoms of child sexual abuse and what to do if a child reports abuse.

We recognize that parents need practical advice. Parents bear the primary responsibility for the safety and well-being of their children. Here are some practical actions that parents can take to help protect their children from sexual abuse:



1. By virtue of their physical size, adults have power over children—and that increases a child's vulnerability. For example, parents and other authority figures teach children to "obey adults." When children hear this message, they may interpret it to mean that *all* adults have the authority to tell *all* children what to do, *all* the time. If this is a child's interpretation, then the message has created additional vulnerability for the child. Yet, some simple, common sense steps can help minimize a child's vulnerability. For example:

- Do NOT insist that children hug or kiss relatives or friends. Let children express affection on their own terms.



- Let children know that their feelings are important to you. Intervene if you notice that your child is uncomfortable doing something that another adult asks him or her to do. Let the child know that you will protect him or her from this discomfort. That doesn't necessarily mean that you should let children off the hook when it comes to doing their chores or cleaning up a mess they've made.
2. Learn to recognize and take advantage of teachable moments with children. Be willing to openly discuss sensitive issues. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the following age-appropriate conversations with children:
- From ages 18 months to 3 years—begin teaching children the proper names for all body parts.
  - Ages 3 to 5 years—teach children about private body parts and how to say "no" to anyone who touches them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. Give them direct answers to questions about sex.
  - Ages 5 to 8 years—talk about good touches and bad touches, and safety away from home.
  - Ages 8 to 12 years—focus on personal safety issues.
  - Ages 13 to 18 years—discuss issues such as rape, date rape, HIV, other sexually transmitted diseases, and unintended pregnancy. There are also professionals in the community who can provide assistance with forming age-appropriate responses to children's questions and concerns. Remember, regardless of the child's age: **Take advantage of teachable moments.**
3. Games are a great way to reinforce the lessons you teach your children about safety issues. For example, children are always asking parents, "What if?" Using this same game, parents can raise their own concerns and encourage their children to *think* and *make decisions* relying on the lessons they have learned.
4. Teach children to say, "Stop it," to instructions that might encourage them to do things that they *really* do not want to do. Reinforce the rule that children should say, "Stop it," to requests or demands that make them uncomfortable, even if they *think* they should obey. A discussion of these rules can teach a child that there are some times when it is okay to say, "Stop it," and other times when it is okay to go along with the instructions. Everything hinges on context. Parents must teach their children how to discern between an *appropriate* request and an *inappropriate* request.



- For example, it is appropriate to follow the instruction to "Be nice," as long as the instruction is within an appropriate context, such as, "Be nice and don't throw things at the other children." But, tell children it's okay to disobey this request if, for example, someone says, "Be nice and take off your clothes."
5. Know where children spend their time. Get to know the adults who show up at the various locations in the community where children gather and where they play together. Be wary of any adult who seems more interested in creating a relationship with a child than with other adults. Pay attention when an adult seems to single out a particular child for a relationship or for special attention. Warning signs include treats, gifts, vacations, or other special favors offered only to one specific child.
6. Make unannounced visits to the child's nursery, babysitter, daycare center, or school. When choosing a nursery, daycare center, or school, make sure that there are no areas where children play or work that are "off limits" to parents. Taking these actions raises awareness among caregivers, and reinforces the responsibility they have for the safety of the children in their charge.



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7. Find out if the child's school or church religious education programs include a sex abuse prevention curriculum. If not, volunteer to be on a committee to establish such a program. Work with teachers to review available programs and make recommendations to school administrators. Talk with other parents about supporting the addition of child sexual abuse prevention material to existing child safety programs.



**Do NOT** allow a child to go alone on "vacation" with any adult other than the child's parent.

**Do NOT** allow a child to spend the night alone with any adult other than the child's parent or another **safe** adult.<sup>1</sup>

**Except in the case of a serious emergency, Do NOT** allow a child to travel alone—even for a very short distance—with any adult other than the child's parent or another **safe** adult. You should also prohibit children from accepting expensive gifts from an adult, particularly if one child is singled out for special attention.

Parents can make an important difference. However, without a supporting organization to help bring together a community's resources, experts, and commitment, parents are limited in their ability to impact community-wide child abuse prevention. That's where we can help.

The Church can join with parents to build a society where children are no longer at risk of being sexually abused, where those who have been victimized can find the resources and courage to heal, and where all people live together in loving, supportive relationships.

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### Resources:

*Child Sexual Abuse: What It Is and How to Prevent It*, American Academy of Pediatrics, 1999.

Adams, C., and Fay, J., *No More Secrets: Protecting Your Child From Sexual Abuse*, Impact Publishers, Ninth Printing, 1991.

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### *Practical Advice for Parents on Preventing Child Sexual Abuse*

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<sup>1</sup> "Safe adult" is a special designation used in the VIRTUS Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Program for Parents and Guardians to describe adults who have demonstrated that they behave in a safe manner when interacting with children.

# Safe Environment Parent Pages

The Diocese of Joliet requires Parish RE Programs to distribute the following informational pages to all families. Although you may have seen this information before, please review the contents and have an open line of communication with your child concerning these issues.



## Types of Touches

Teach your children the names of their private body parts. Help them understand that they are the boss of their own body. Explain that there are three kinds of touches:

- **Safe touches.** These are touches that keep children safe and are good for their bodies. Safe touches include hugging, holding hands, pats on the back, and an arm around the shoulder. Safe touches can also include touches that might hurt, such as removing a splinter.
- **Unsafe touches.** These are touches that hurt children's bodies, feelings, or spirits, for example, hitting, pushing, pinching, and kicking. This also includes the sexual touches described in the previous section. Teach children that these kinds of touches are not okay.
- **Unwanted touches.** These are touches that might be safe but a child doesn't want. These include the sexual touches discussed earlier. It is okay for a child to say *no* to an unwanted touch, even if it is from a familiar person.

## For Young Children

Young children remember better how to protect themselves from sexual abuse when they learn and practice a few simple steps so they don't have to wonder what to do, or have to stop and think. Children can be taught to follow these three steps when someone breaks the touching rules.

- Say *no* or words that mean *no*.
  - Get away.
  - Tell a grown-up.
- Expand your child's understanding of the third step by teaching the following:
- Never keep secrets about touching.
  - Always tell about a touching problem even if it has gone on for a long time.
  - Keep telling until someone believes you.

## Teach Assertiveness Skills

Children who are assertive are better able to use the safety steps effectively and resist unsafe situations. Assertive behavior includes standing up straight, looking directly at the person and using a strong, clear voice.

## Safety on the Internet

It is important for parents to educate children about Internet risks and monitor use of the Internet. Some rules:

- Never give out personal information or use a credit card online without your parent's permission.
- Never share passwords with anyone.
- Never arrange to meet someone in person you have met online unless parents go along with you.
- Never reply to uncomfortable messages. Always tell parents about them.



## For Teens or Pre-Teens

Honest, open discussions about sexual values/limits, healthy relationships, and personal safety can make a difference. Teens should:

- Recall that human sexuality is a graced gift from God. Intimate touching and sexual intercourse are morally appropriate only within marriage.
- Know their own wishes, limits and values, and clearly communicate them to their dates. They should listen to their date's limits and respect them.
- Notice if their date is not respecting their limits and wishes or if their date's behavior doesn't seem right.
- Trust their feelings and intuition. If they are feeling pressured into sex, they have the right to say *no*.

- Be assertive and act immediately if their limits are reached, even if it means making a scene.
- Understand that it is never too late to say *no* and never too late to hear *no*.

## More Safety Tips for Teens

- Avoid drugs or alcohol, which reduce one's ability to think clearly and manage one's behavior.
- Always pour your own beverages at a party and keep them in sight. Date-rape drugs can be put in drinks and are often undetectable.
- Go to parties with a buddy and look after each other. Always have a safe way home.
- Meet a date in a public place or stay around others.
- Tell someone about the date, where it will take place, and what time it will end.
- Take a cell phone along if possible.

## The Bottom Line

- No means *no* whenever a person feels pressured about anything and it should be respected!
- If a person says *no* and the other person continues to touch or to force touch it is abusive behavior.
- If a person forces another person to have sexual intercourse, it is rape, a criminal offense.

## Safe Families

Being a parent is one of life's greatest challenges. However, if you have a strong relationship built on a foundation of trust, and your children have skills in self-management, relationship-building, and problem-solving, they are more likely to make safe choices and set personal safety boundaries.

For more tips for parents, please visit  
<http://www.cfchildren.org/parents/parenttips/>

*If someone has been abused,*  
 contact the Illinois Department of Children and  
 Family Services at

**1-800-25ABUSE (1-800-252-2873)**

# Parent Guide



# Understanding & Preventing Child Sexual Abuse



## Diocese of Joliet

16555 Weber Road, Crest Hill, IL 60403  
[www.dioceseofjoliet.org](http://www.dioceseofjoliet.org)



Dear Parents and Guardians,

The Diocese of Joliet is committed to promoting an environment that will help ensure the safety of children and young people. If you have participated in a *Protecting God's Children* session, you have already received much information.

This brochure is the next step in our efforts to help keep children safe. You are the primary educators of your children, so it is important that you talk with them personally about their safety. The material in this brochure is designed to give you background information about sexual abuse, to inform you about other ways to keep your children safe, and to provide you with tips for talking to your children.

Staff members at the Religious Education Office (815-221-8147) and at the Catholic Schools Office (815-838-2181) are available to help you. Please call them if you have any questions about the material contained in this brochure or if you need more information.

Sincerely,

*Jane A. Davies, OSF*

Sister Judith A. Davies, OSF  
Chancellor

Content of this brochure is adapted from  
"Keeping Children Safe from Abuse: Tips for  
Parents and Caregivers"

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[www.cfchildren.org](http://www.cfchildren.org)

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## SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### What Is Child Sexual Abuse?

Child sexual abuse is the use of a child for sexual purposes by an adult or an older, more powerful person, including an older child. *It is a crime in all 50 states.* Sexual abuse is called incest when it happens between family members.

### Who Are the Offenders?

- Most sexual abuse is committed by a person the child knows and trusts.
- Offenders come from all walks of life and from all social and ethnic groups.
- Offenders actively work to develop trusting relationships with children.

### Who Is At Risk?

- Sexual abuse happens to boys and girls from all social and ethnic groups from infancy to 18 years.
- Young children are especially at risk.

### Why Don't Children Tell?

Some reasons children do not tell are:

- They have been taught to obey adults.
- They promised or have been bribed to keep the abuse secret.
- They have been threatened by the offender and are afraid to tell.
- They feel guilty because they believe that the abuse is their fault and are ashamed to tell.
- They are confused because the offender is someone whom they know and trust.
- They have been convinced that the abuse is normal or okay.
- They are too young to know the touching is not appropriate, especially if someone they know and trust does it.
- They don't know the words to tell about the abuse.

### Do Children Lie About Abuse?



Children rarely lie about sexual abuse. More often, they are afraid to tell.

## PROTECTING YOUR CHILDREN

Here are some things you can do:

- Educate yourself about sexual abuse.
- Learn and practice specific guidelines for protecting children from sexual abuse.
- Talk to your children about touching safety. (See *Teaching Personal Safety Skills*.)
- Teach your children personal safety rules before they reach school age.
- Allow your children to participate in personal safety instruction.

### Safety with Babysitters

- Ask babysitters for references and check them.
- Interview babysitters in person. Ask how they discipline children. Ask what if questions to find out how they would cope with tricky situations.
- Inform them about your family safety rules, including touching safety rules.
- Set other rules for the sitter. (TV, phone use, and friends)
- Make surprise visits to check on them.
- Ask your children what happens when a babysitter is there and whether they like him or her. If they don't like the babysitter, ask for reasons.

Follow these guidelines even if the babysitter is a family member.

### Guidelines for Single Parents

If you are a single parent and are dating, this brings unfamiliar adults into your home.

- Let your new friend know your family's safety rules, especially about touching.
- Tell him or her that your children have been taught to tell if any of these rules are broken.
- Don't leave your children alone with a new friend until you know him or her well.
- Ask your children if they like the new person and why or why not.
- Watch your children's reactions for clues to how they feel.

## TEACHING PERSONAL SAFETY SKILLS

Talking openly and honestly sets a tone that helps children feel safe and allows them to talk to you about anything. *Talk with them about touching and private body parts.* Here are some tips:

- Make touching safety a part of your family's safety rules.
- Take advantage of everyday teachable moments: bath time, physical play situations, when a child expresses curiosity about his body or sexuality, and before a child goes out without you.
- Read a book or view a video on touching safety together with your child.
- Revisit the conversation. Don't just talk about this important matter once!

### Teach Your Children These Rules

- It is not okay for someone to touch your private body parts.
- It is not okay for someone to touch his or her own private body parts in front of you or to ask you to touch them.
- It is not okay for someone to ask you to take your clothes off or to take photos or videos of you with your clothes off.
- It is not okay for someone to show you photos or videos of people without their clothes on.



*"Young people especially are at risk of being deceived by the glamour of modern secular culture. Yet, like all the hopes that appear on first sight to promise so much, this turns out to be a false hope ... If their youthful energy and enthusiasm can be directed towards the things of God, which alone are sufficient to satisfy their deepest longings, more young people will be inspired to commit their lives to Christ."*

Pope Benedict XVI,  
December 15, 2007

## Raising Love-Wise Teens

You, as the parent, are invited to joyfully embrace your responsibility to form your children in the ways of true love and maturity. Here are some starting points:

1. Create a climate of Christian virtue in your home by practicing open, loving communication as you work, pray, and play together. Select entertainment and leisure activities that inspire goodness, truth, and beauty.
2. Set clear and consistent boundaries for behavior. Explain and hold firmly to them. Remember, everyone is NOT doing it. Monitor choices of friends, language, and clothing.
3. Help teens avoid destructive influences by using internet controls, movie screening websites, and guidelines for the use of TV and reading materials.
4. Seek help from God's grace through the Church, offered freely through Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Discussion of each Sunday's Scripture readings can inspire a living faith. Participation in the life of the parish helps teens to experience themselves as part of the *Body of Christ*.
5. Build a network of family and friends who are supportive of Catholic values to whom you can turn when in need of encouragement, direction and affirmation.
6. Continue to educate yourself on the beauty of the Catholic teachings on sexuality. If you understand them better and live them yourself, you can pass the treasure of truth on to your children.



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## Sexuality, Chastity & Our Youth:

### A Challenge for Parents Today

Are you concerned when:

- You can't find a modest outfit for your 10-year-old daughter or son?
- Your 11-year-old asks to hang out at the mall with friends... some girls, some boys?
- Your 13-year-old was allowed to view an R rated movie at a friend's house?

You are **not** alone...



## What's a Parent to Do?

- Do we go with the flow and accept this as the *real world* today?
- Do we trust our parental instincts when we feel uncomfortable with a situation?
- Do we look to our Catholic faith while making important parenting decisions?

## Our Youth: Made In God's Image

Parenting teens and preteens today is not easy. They are bombarded with pressures from peers - media - advertisers - magazines - shopping centers - and even schools!

Years ago, we baptized our children into the Body of Christ, the Church. We promised to parent them in the light of Christ and protect them from darkness. Today, they are frequently exposed to unchristian values, messages and pressures. They need our help to stand strong in their Catholic faith in order to experience the fullness of life that comes only in and through Christ.



## Your Child Looks to You for Guidance

- Studies show that teens and preteens actually desire more time with their families! They want love, limits, and discipline - even if they appear to resist it.
- It takes effort and scheduling for parents to make faith and family relationships a priority. If you make the effort and take the time, your whole family will benefit.



## Adolescence: Bridge to Adulthood

- Adolescence is a time for youth to get to know themselves, their strengths, and weaknesses in light of God's love.
- It is a time for them to make their faith their own.
- It is a time to grow closer to God while facing the new challenges of life.
- It is a time to develop their talents in order to spread the message of Christ through the vocation they are called to and the career they choose.



## God's Invitation to Mature Love

God asks all people to give themselves - body, mind, and soul - to loving service as disciples of Christ. As St. Paul tells us, all are called to a mature and selfless love that is "patient, kind, not rude, not jealous." (1 Cor. 13:4) Adolescents need preparation for and practice in this unselfish love in order to succeed in life.

Catholic parents can help by slowing down the social pressures and offering what teens and preteens need:

1. fortitude to avoid evil and practice morality.
2. knowledge for defending the truths of the faith and willpower to choose what is good and true.
3. loving support to understand and deal with feelings appropriately.
4. a personal prayer life and a sacramental life that is rooted in weekly Eucharist and regular Reconciliation.
5. opportunities to volunteer in service to others so as to foster generosity of spirit.
6. modeling of kindness, patience, humility and obedience.

God's plan for a life of grace and self-discipline includes practicing virtues such as honesty, charity, justice, and chastity. It is in this life of Christian virtue that teens and preteens discover themselves and become their "best self" before they can enter into mature relationships with others.

## Chastity: The Path to Real Love

Chastity is the virtue of sexual purity. A chaste person tries to practice purity in his or her thoughts, words, and actions. Out of respect for the dignity and sacredness of married love, all intimate physical expressions belong within marriage. Chastity keeps love honest, personal, selfless, and faithful. In this world of superficiality, chastity makes love real.



God's desire is that each married couple will have the best love experience possible; a reflection of his love, faithful and open to new life. A man and a woman enter into the Sacrament of Matrimony to publicly proclaim their loving commitment and to ask God's blessings and graces for their new family. A lifetime of joys, struggles, and sacrifices offer couples opportunities to grow deeper in love and closer to God through the vocation of marriage.

As a parent, you can help your teens and preteens begin now to appreciate the beauty and wisdom of God's plan for sexuality, chastity, and married love. They can discover more happiness and freedom when they choose to live in accordance with God's will.

*"Chastity is the joyous affirmation of someone who knows how to live self-giving, free from any form of self-centered slavery. This presupposes that the person has learned how to accept other people, to relate with them, while respecting their dignity in diversity. The chaste person is not self-centered, not involved in selfish relationships with other people. Chastity makes the personality harmonious. It matures it and fills it with inner peace."*



*The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality par. 17 Vatican.va*



## Resources for Parents

### General Internet Safety Guides

[www.onguardonline.org](http://www.onguardonline.org)  
[www.NetSafeKids.org](http://www.NetSafeKids.org)  
[www.pollyklaas.org](http://www.pollyklaas.org)  
[www.willcountysao.com](http://www.willcountysao.com)  
[www.cyberangels.org](http://www.cyberangels.org)

### Internet Filtering Software

<http://kids.getnetwise.org>

### Internet and Cell Phone Safety

[www.NetSmartz.org](http://www.NetSmartz.org)  
[www.microsoft.com/protect](http://www.microsoft.com/protect)  
[www.safeteens.com](http://www.safeteens.com)  
[www.safekids.com](http://www.safekids.com)  
[www.netparents.org](http://www.netparents.org)



### Tips on Cell Phone Use

1. Take precautions with your child's cell phone.
2. Be specific about cell phone use and set up specific rules about how and when the phone will be used. Set a limit on how much time children can use each month and how many text messages they can send and receive.
3. Emphasize and enforce the rule that teens must follow all laws when driving and using a cell phone.
4. Review school policies and agreements regarding cell phone usage on school grounds during the school day and after school.
5. Explain potential legal consequences of sexting.
6. Make the child aware texting reveals your phone number to whomever you send a message.
7. Children should:
  - know that predators can also send messages and call to arrange meetings.
  - know that if they receive a bullying or threatening text message, they should report it immediately to a parent or trusted adult
  - not answer a call from a number that they are not familiar with or not expecting.
8. Review your service plan to learn which features can be blocked to protect children.



## PARENT GUIDE



## Internet Safety for Children & Teens



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# Internet Safety

The amount of information available on the Internet continues to grow at an astounding rate. Opportunities abound for social networking, building online profiles, sending video and photos, sharing ideas and thoughts through blogs, tweets. These ways of socializing and communicating can be fulfilling and worthwhile, yet they do come with certain risks of inappropriate content, contact and conduct. This brief guide attempts to provide general information and where to go for additional information.

www.thearticle.com

ing and communicating can be fulfilling and worthwhile, yet they do come with certain risks of inappropriate content, contact and conduct. This brief guide attempts to provide general information and where to go for additional information.

## General Parent Guidelines

1. **Talk to Your Children**—children of all ages (including toddlers) see parents using multiple electronic devices. Children as young as 2 are now using computers for learning. As soon as your child is using an electronic device, it is time to talk to them about online behavior, safety, and security.

### How to begin

- Start Early
- Create an Honest and Open Environment
- Initiate conversations
- Communicate your values
- Be Patient

2. **Learn How to Monitor What Your Children Do Online**

There are many good sites that help parents learn how monitor, control, and block electronic use such as [getnetwise.com](http://getnetwise.com). The site has many video tutorials, extensive tools that parents can use and a wealth of information.

## For Parents of Children (Aged 5-12)



1. Keep the computer in a public place with the screen facing outward.
2. Establish family rules and guidelines to include:
  - a. setting limits on how much time they spend online
  - b. no personal information given
  - c. no school information disclosed
  - d. review of pictures posted.
3. Reinforce the dangers of and penalties for sharing personal or school information. Many schools have policies against students posting information about the school, including the school name, teacher names, etc. Carefully review your school's policies and agreements with your child.
4. Prohibit any meeting in person with someone he/she knows only online, unless you are present.
5. Inform your children that you will monitor Internet use, messaging, and social networking in order to keep them safe.

## For Parents of Teenagers (Aged 13-17)

1. Teens have more Internet access through cell phones, mobile devices, or friend's computers, as well as more time to themselves. Consequently, it is not realistic to always be in the same room as your teens when they are online. Reinforce the concept that you and other family members can walk in at anytime, and ask them what they are doing online.

2. Emphasize the concept of credibility and not everything they see on the Internet is true.
3. Let them know that everything on the Internet is public and that it is close to impossible to "take something back once it is posted"
4. Share stories using real examples of teens who have been harmed or hurt because of unsafe online practices.
5. Remind your teen that behind screen names, avatars, profiles are real people with values and feelings. They need to be mindful of what they say and exercise good judgment..
6. Inform your teen that many institutions and companies routinely comb social networking sites to determine if potential job applicants fit their expectations.
7. Remind students that photos can be as damaging to one's reputation as words. Review pictures that are posted.
8. Meeting someone contacted online carries considerable risk and is not advised. If a meeting is arranged adhere to the following:
  - a. do not meet alone.
  - b. go with a trusted adult..
  - c. meet in a public place.
  - d. if not what you expected, walk away and tell a parent or trusted adult.
9. Do not overreact if and when you find out that your teen has done something online of which you do not approve.
10. Reinforce the expectation that parents monitor Internet use and that safety rules must be followed.
11. If teens confide in you about something scary or inappropriate that they encountered online, your first response should not be to take away Internet privileges. Try to be supportive and work with them to help prevent this from happening in the future.