

1. **Meet children where they are. Don't assume anything. Find out what they know before you start talking.**
2. **Provide information that is age appropriate. If they're under 8 years old, don't introduce this topic to them. Find out if they know anything about it, and if they don't, you don't need to add any additional information.**

Level of detail needs to be determined by their ability to comprehend it.

As horrific as this is, the virus doesn't appear to be as much of a threat to children.

3. **Be calm! – they take cues from you. Anxiety is contagious.**
4. **Be empathetic; relate a scary story from your childhood and how you got through it. It's ok to be afraid. There is NO *normal* for this.**
5. **Empower your child. Show them what they can do to protect themselves and others. This is a great opportunity to teach and model healthy behavior (diet, exercise, Faith, mental outlook and optimism).**
6. **Point out how so many people are working together to make things better (doctors, nurses, researchers, first responders, etc.)**
7. **God is still in charge. Emphasize that God did not cause this but will always bring good from bad. Sometimes He permits things to happen and we do not know why but we need to trust Him. It seems He sometimes allows His children to experience consequences from their mistakes—something all parents do. If age appropriate you may want to use the word, trial. The world is broken and we bring light.**
8. **This is an opportunity to pool from the treasure chest of our Faith: pray as individuals and as a family, pray the rosary as a family (comforting and calming as well as powerful), implore saints to intervene, attend Mass via technology, identify brief lines from scripture on which to focus and reflect. Point them to the toolbox of our Faith. For very young children, let them have a phrase or task that they can use throughout the day (e.g., *God is good, I can do all things in God who strengthens me*, etc.) Teenagers may begin to understand Mary at the foot of the cross—uncertainty that breeds anxiety and yet faith and trust in God.**
9. **Remember that you are modeling coping skills that your child will use throughout life!**

## **MARIETTE DANILO, Ph.D.**

### **Background and Expertise:**

Dr. Mariette Danilo holds a Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from Columbia University. She has taught graduate courses in psychology and has worked as a researcher at the *Health Behavior Institute* of the *Cornell University-New York Hospital Center*. There, she served as part of a multidisciplinary team that designed, implemented, and assessed the effectiveness of prevention programs for middle and high school students. Her research has focused on the cognitive, emotional, and psychosocial variables involved in the development and prediction of risk taking, health compromising and problem behaviors.

Dr. Danilo is the founder of ***Life Courses, LLC***, a one of a kind consulting business based on three decades of research, and offering opportunities for comprehensive, evidence-based learning experiences for the life course. Her unique approach considers development, life transitions, and environmental contexts that influence lifestyle attitudes and behavior. This approach is informed by the scientific study of the whole person.

Dr. Danilo uses evidence-based programs and designs learning experiences that apply knowledge-based health behavior models to real life contexts such as schools, workplaces, adult communities, the home (e.g., marriage, family, and parenting), as well as the individual lifestyle. A partial list of program offerings includes: Abuse recognition and prevention (e.g., bullying and safe dating), decision making, conflict resolution and communication skills, stress and coping with anxiety (identification and management), anger (recognition, burnout and management), boundaries in relationships and more. Comprehensive approaches such as this have the potential to transform individuals, schools, corporate cultures, and whole communities.

Dr. Mariette Danilo also serves as the Director of Education for the Saint John Vianney Center. Mariette designs educational experiences and oversees the program implementation process for the Consultation, Education and Outreach Department, utilizing a scientific knowledge base that is always, first and foremost, presented through the lens of Faith.