

Responsible Sharing on Instagram



In the March Newsletter I included an article for parents entitled “Top 5 Questions Parents Have About Instagram”. Hopefully, you distributed that in some way and parents found it helpful. This month I am continuing with the topic of *Instagram* and hope you will share it with catechists and parents alike. The more we know about social media, the more we can help our young people to be responsible in its use.

If your kids are using *Instagram*, the best way for you to learn about how it works is to ask them. Children are often glad to teach their parents about their favorite tech tools, and asking them about *Instagram* is not only a great way to learn about the app itself but also about how your children interact with their friends in social media. That’s very individual, which is why we suggest you ask them about it, but if you want a little general information about using and staying safe in *Instagram*, read the following:

◆ **You control your privacy.** By default, photos and videos you share in *Instagram* can be seen by anyone (unless you share them directly) but you can easily make your account private so you get to approve anyone who wants to follow you. To do that, tap Profile on the bottom right, then Edit Your Profile next to your profile picture. Scroll down to see if “Posts are Private” is turned on or off. If turned off, you can make your photos private by toggling the switch to on.

◆ **Instagram Direct is automatically private** Anyone, including people you don’t follow, can send you an image or video that only you and up to 14 other people can see or comment on. If you follow that person, the image will be sent to your direct folder. If you don’t follow the person, it’ll arrive in a Request Folder until you approve that person. If you choose to ignore the person, he or she won’t be able to send you an *Instagram* unless you go back and change that setting later.

◆ **Privacy can’t be perfect.** Even if your posts are private, your profile is public (anyone can see your profile photo, username and bio). You can add up to 10 lines of text about yourself, so parents and kids may want to talk about what’s appropriate to say on their bio screens.

◆ **Respect other people’s privacy.** If someone else is in a photo you post, make sure that person’s “ok” with your

sharing or tagging them in it.

◆ **Your posts have impact.** Think about how media you post affects others—whether they’re in them or not. Sometimes it’s the friends not in the photo or video who can be hurt, because they were excluded.

◆ **Think about your location sharing.** The “Add to Photo Map” feature gives you the option of adding a location to a photo. It’s turned off by default, but it’s “sticky” - so once turned on, it stays on until you turn it off. You can always turn it back on but, for each posting you share, think about whether you really want people to know where it was snapped or recorded.

◆ **Sharing beyond Instagram.** By default, you’re sharing your media only on *Instagram* but you have the option to share more widely by clicking on “email”, “Facebook”, “Twitter”, etc. If you do share elsewhere, be aware of the privacy setting on that service. For example, unless your profile’s private, Twitter shares to everyone by default. Facebook, by default, will share media posted from *Instagram* to friends only. But after you share on Facebook, you can change that setting in Facebook by selecting it and changing the audience.

(Taken from: ConnectSafely.org)