



Safe Environment of the Archdiocese



APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

In Matthew 18:5, Jesus says “whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me.”

It takes the responsibility of all adults to keep children and youth safe from abuse.

In Mark 10:14, Jesus says, “Let the little children come to me, and do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”

Children and young people are gifts from God and deserve to be safe from all harm, including abuse.

“The Church loves all her children like a loving mother, but cares for all and protects with a special affection those who are smallest and defenseless. This is the duty that Christ himself entrusted to the entire Christian community as a whole. Aware of this, the Church is especially vigilant in protecting children and vulnerable adults. (Pope Francis)

As an Archdiocese we have promised to protect & heal

If you or someone you know has been abused by a member of the Church, please contact our hotline number (405-720-9878) to report it and to learn about healing opportunities within the Archdiocese of OKC.

PROMISE TO PROTECT

PLEDGE TO HEAL



What is your parish doing to raise awareness of child abuse?

(Find some suggestions on the next page)

Have you made safe environment visible in your parish?



*Are posters displayed in prominent places such as Church lobby, school hallways, meeting places?

*Do you have tri-fold brochures and posters in prominent places such as Church lobby, school/parish receptionist desk, etc.

***Did you publish the parish bulletin insert yet? It should be done during April which is the fourth publication of this fiscal year.**

*Do you have anyone who has regular contact with youth who has not finished our safe environment protocol? If so, you are NOT in compliance with the Archdiocesan policy.

***Are you ready for our on-site audit this Fall?** Does each employee and every volunteer who has regular contact with children and youth have a safe environment folder with all the required documentation?

*Have you put in the data base the **dates** of training, signing Code of Conduct, and background check of every individual?

All of this is a part of:

***Promise
to
Protect;
Pledge
to
Heal!***

Did you know?

◆The Catholic Church in the U.S. provided age appropriate safe environment abuse prevention training to more than 4 million children and youth in Catholic Schools and in parish religious education programs.

◆Last year, over 2 million adults were background checked and received safe environment training in the Church.

◆In our Archdiocese, last year 16,829 children/youth were taught the Circle of Grace age appropriate curriculum.

◆In our Archdiocese, 506 educators, 1,002 employees and 12,045 volunteers were trained in safe environment.

Thank you to all our pastors, facilitators, DRE's, youth ministers, principals, and any helpers in our safe environment process.

Are you ready to observe CAP Month?



Build your Blue Ribbon Tree as a witness of the Catholic Church's commitment to prevent abuse. It/they can be inside, outside or both! If you can, register your tree with the State. Send your pictures to Sister Kay as well. Pictures should be sent to me by April 10th, the latest.

Ask your pastor or liturgy committee to include in the Prayers of the Faithful at Sunday liturgy some intentions for those children who are victims of abuse.



With the rest of the US, observe Sunday, April 29th as National Blue Sunday, a day of prayer for abused children.



Have a "Wear Blue Day" for adults & children.

A Parents' Primer on Internet Pornography, Pt. 2

By Dr. Walter Mueller, President, Center for Parent/Youth Understanding



What are the effects of pornography on children and teens?

Research has associated the following outcomes with the use of pornography by children and teens:

- An exaggerated perception of sexual activity in society...the belief that “everyone’s doing it” and “this must be normal”
- The abandonment of the hope of remaining sexually monogamous
- Belief that sexual promiscuity is natural and normal
- Belief that sexual abstinence and sexual inactivity are abnormal and unhealthy
- Belief that marriage is sexually confining
- A lack of attraction to family and child-rearing
- Negative and/or traumatic emotional responses
- Earlier onset of first sexual intercourse
- The commodification of sex and the sexual objectification of persons
- Increased acceptance of sexual perversions as normal
- Belief that all women should act and be treated as porn stars, and willingly receiving/enjoying aggressive and violent sexual perversions



What are the effects of pornography on adults?

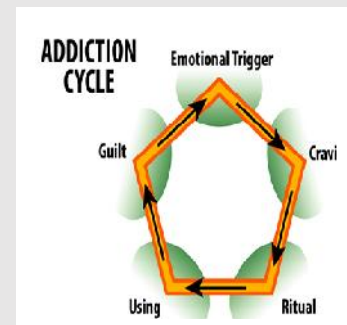
Research has associated the following outcomes with the use of pornography by adults:

- Desensitization to depicted behaviors and normalization of what is seen
- Increased appetite for more graphic types of pornography and abusive, unsafe, or illegal sexual practices
- Decreased marital intimacy and sexual satisfaction
- Infidelity
- Increased marital distress, separation, and divorce
- Devaluation of monogamy, marriage, and child-rearing
- Struggles with compulsive or addictive sexual behaviors
- Decreased ability to perform sexually



What are the signs of pornography addiction?

- A preoccupation and obsession with pornography
- An inability to stop looking at pornography in spite of previous attempts to do so
- Attempting to keep your obsession with pornography a secret
- Feeling of shame and guilt
- It interferes with your marriage, home life, job, or schooling
- A need to increase intensity and frequency in order to get the desired outcomes
- Irritability when you are unable to access pornography
- Continuing the behavior in spite of the risk or realization of consequences, including relational breakdowns and job loss



Pornography's Lies

As an expression of brokenness, pornography takes God's good gift of sexuality and twists it all around. Pornography tells lies. And the deeper we go into pornography, the more we are convinced that the lies are not lies, but that they are truth. Here are some of the lies pornography tells:

- People are sexual objects to be used for our own pleasure
- Using pornography will make your life-and your sex life-better
- Sex is purely a recreational sport
- The main purpose of sex is to have your own personal needs met
- Pornography doesn't hurt anyone
- To dominate someone sexually is more fun and enjoyable than mutual sexual pleasure between a married husband and wife
- Pornography offers intimacy
- Pornography portrays sex as it was meant to be



“Research reveals many systemic effects of internet pornography that are undermining an already vulnerable culture of marriage and family. Even more disturbing is the fact that the first internet generations have not reached full-maturity, so the upper-limits of this impact have yet to be realized.” (Jim Manning, Sociologist)

Steps to Living Porn-Free...

Because pornography is a complex issue and trap, there are no easy avenues to being rescued and released from pornography's hold on your life. In his book ***Closing the Window: Steps to Living Porn Free*** (InterVarsity Press, 2010), Tim Chester describes the five key ingredients that need to be in place to win the battle. While we recommend that you read and study *Closing the Window* for yourself, here's a list of Chester's five key ingredients:

- 1) An abhorrence of porn. You must hate pornography and long for a change.
- 2) An adoration of God. You must desire God above all else and have confidence in the fact that He offers much more than pornography.
- 3) An assurance of grace. You must know that you are loved by God and with Him through faith in the work of Jesus Christ.
- 4) An avoidance of temptation. You must be committed to do everything in your power to avoid temptation, beginning with the controls on your computer and other devices.
- 5) Accountability to others. Submit yourself to a community of Christians who will hold you accountable and support you in your struggle.

When You Discover Your Child or Teen Has Accessed Pornography...

Sadly, parenting in today's world means that having to follow-up on exposure to pornography is a when, not if, reality. Our friends at Harvest USA (a ministry to the sexually broken-harvestusa.org) make some great recommendations in their article, "My Kids Have Looked at Porn! What Do I Do Now?" While we strongly recommend you read the entire article (you can access it on their website), here's a rundown of the steps you should take:

- 1) Control your anger. Remember to direct your anger at the sin and not to your child.
- 2) Go after their heart, not their behavior. You want to deal with the root of the issue, not the symptoms. A grace-filled approach that points them to Christ and an understanding of their fallenness and longings will help you direct our child to turn to Christ for his forgiveness and grace.
- 3) Keep a discussion going about sex. Their pornography use has opened the door for you to discuss God's wonderful gift of sexuality and the parameters He's established for healthy sexual expression.
- 4) Examine your own heart. Are you living God's design for your own sexuality?
- 5) Block the doors. Take steps to restrict access and choices, while engaging them in ongoing accountability.
- 6) Don't let up or give up. This is not a behavior that is fixed with controls. Shepherd them forward in their spiritual lives with the goal of heart change.
- 7) Evaluate whether or not outside counseling is necessary or beneficial. If in doubt, err on the side of caution and secure the services of a competent Christian counselor who has experience dealing with issues related to children, teens, and pornography.

Recommended Resources:

Websites: www.reclaimsexualhealth.com
www.integrityrestored.com
www.covenanteyes.com
www.harvestusa.org

DVD Webinar: *Pornography and Your Kids: What You Need to Know and What You Need to Do* (available at www.cpyuresourcecenter.org)

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(Part I of this article appeared in the March, 2018 Newsletter which can be found at www.archokc.org/safeenvironment)

Pray for children who are abused in any way – sexually, emotionally, physically or through neglect.