Checklist for a Spiritually Healthy Family in a Tech-Savvy World

1-Never, 2- Sometimes, 3-Always

Family Checklist	1	2	3	n/a

1. Does your family pray together...
  o **Grace before/after meals?**
  o **Family Rosary?**
  o **Sunday Mass?**
  o **Daily Mass?**				

2. Does your family read the Bible together?				
3. Does your family participate in the life of the parish... **Sunday Mass, Holy Days, Special devotions,** **Confession** **Organizations** **Time-Talent-Treasure**				
4. Does your family observe Sundays as a family day and day of rest?				
5. Does your family perform works of mercy together? (feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, etc.)?				
6. Does your family regularly enjoy meals together?				
Media and technology use				

7. Do the parents set rules and expectations for the children regarding:
  o **Telephone use**
  o **Computer and Internet use**
  o **Video games**
  o **Study time**
  o **Curfew**				

8. Do the parents monitor and limit what the children are allowed to watch on TV?				
9. Do the parents monitor and limit what movies the children are allowed to watch?				
10. Are all computers and televisions within the home in open and visible places (and, in particular, not in children's bedrooms)?				
11. Do all computers in the house have an Internet filter to block pornography from entering the home or accountability software?				

12. Have the parents talked to the children about the dangers of chat rooms, social networking sites, webcam use and texting?				
13. Have the parents warned the children against giving their name, address, phone number, e-address, age, name of their school, or any other personal information online or to a stranger?				
14. Have the parents talked to the children about cyber predators and their method of pretending to be a peer, befriending children, requiring secrecy and eventually requesting a secret meeting?				
15. Do the parents have access to the children's usernames and passwords for their email account(s), social networking sites, chat rooms, etc.? Do the parents regularly read excerpts from those accounts, with the knowledge of the children?				
16. Do the parents regularly check the history of the children's computers and the phone numbers on the children's cell phones?				
17. Do the parents make wise and virtue-centered choices about their own entertainment, including television, movies, reading material, and Internet?				
18. Do the parents, both publicly and privately, model the kind of behavior they want their children to emulate?				

If you scored 25-30, you are clearly concerned about making good choices for your family. Keep up the good work, and come and participate in *As For Me and My House* to share the secrets of your success.

If you scored 15-24, perhaps your family could benefit from better monitoring. *As For Me and My House* may be just what you need.

If you scored less than 15, we urge you to begin now to make some positive changes for the health of your family. *As For Me and My House* is ready, willing and able to help.

Visit www.archstl.org/myhouse for more information on protecting your family.

Reflection for the
"Checklist for a Spiritually Healthy Family in a Tech-Savvy World"

Does your family pray together?
A family that prays together stays together. Prayer will form the bond with God that He desires from us. "The Christian home is the place where children receive the first proclamation of the faith. For this reason the family home is rightly called "the domestic church," a community of grace and prayer, a school of human virtues and of Christian charity" (CCC 1666).

Does your family read the Bible together?
"The Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit...It is called to partake of the prayer and sacrifice of Christ. Daily prayer and the reading of the Word of God strengthen it in charity" (CCC 2205).

Does your family participate in the life of the parish?
Family activity and sharing in the celebration of the Mass together will instill a lifetime desire of giving back to God and the community. "The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents" (CCC 2226).

Does your family observe Sundays as a family day and day of rest?
Sundays should be reserved for family time. Consider declaring Sunday a "media free" day and turning off the TV, computer, etc.

Does your family perform works of mercy together?
"The family should live in such a way that its members learn to care and take responsibility for the young, the old, the sick, the handicapped, and the poor" (CCC 2208).

Does your family enjoy regular meals together?
This is a great opportunity for sharing among family members and may be the only uninterrupted time of the day.

Do the parents set rules and expectations for the children regarding media and technology use?
Kids are still kids and as such need and actually yearn for the guidance their parents can provide in setting limits. Don't be fooled by children testing the limits. This behavior allows them to grow and understand authority.

Do the parents monitor and limit what the children are allowed to watch on TV/movies?
Children, when left to their own choices, will develop a very unrealistic view of societal expectations.

Are all computers and televisions within the home in open and visible places (and, in particular, not in children's bedrooms)?
Even with the proper guidelines in place children will test your boundaries and need to be monitored.

Do all computers in the house have an Internet filter to block pornography from entering the home or accountability software?
Parents need to teach kids also that when surfing the web, they will almost certainly come across inappropriate pictures or videos. Kids need to learn that the only appropriate response in these situations is to click off the image as quickly as possible. If the image doesn't go away, then shut down the website immediately. Parents need to teach their kids that pornographic pictures or videos can be mentally harmful, physically addictive, and even illegal. Parents need to understand that the porn industry is now targeting children from ages 5 – 9, due to the addictive nature of pornography. If they can get kids hooked while they're young, then they have lifetime customers. Accountability software reports to parents every questionable website accessed on a computer. Free accountability software can be found online. (Excerpt from "Tips for Parents" – National Coalition – Dr. John Splinter)

Have the parents talked to the children about the dangers of chat rooms, social networking sites, webcam use and texting?
Pedophiles may still hang around children's playgrounds, but they love the Internet. Social chat-rooms have become the new "playground" against which parents need to guard. Pedophiles are expert in cracking the codes in order to get into places like My Space, Facebook, and other social websites.
Parents need to teach their kids that webcam photos can be easily captured, and that other users actually might circulate those pictures online. In some cases kids thought they were interacting with trusted friends only to find out later that their pictures were distributed to other kids, or posted on the Internet for the whole world to see. (from Tips for Parents – National Coalition – John Splinter)

Have the parents warned the children against giving their name, address, phone number, e-address, age, name of their school, or any other personal information online or to a stranger?
It is never safe to give out personal information online.

Have the parents talked to the children about cyber predators and their method of pretending to be a peer, befriending children, requiring secrecy and eventually requesting a secret meeting?
One police officer in the St. Louis region reported making 52 arrests for cyber-crime, within an 18-month time period. That's just one cop, in one area of town, in one time period. This has become such a serious concern that the FBI now has a web page dealing with this subject. (from Tips for Parents – National Coalition – John Splinter)

Do the parents have access to the children's usernames and passwords for their email account(s), social networking sites, chat rooms, etc.? Do the parents regularly read excerpts from those accounts, with the knowledge of the children? Do the parents regularly check the history of the children's computers and the phone numbers on the children's cell phones?

Cyber technology changes some of the demands of parenting. Among other things, it means that you must have full access to your children's web addresses, pass codes, and all pertinent information so that you may at any time enter their e-mail account, and their "My Space," "Facebook," or other social website chat rooms. And you should enter and read excerpts from those accounts from time to time. Do not be naïve about your child's capabilities, both technical and moral. You must check their computer's histories regularly, and you must check the phone numbers that your child uses on his/her cell phone. All of this is just normal, responsible parenting in today's cyber-age. (from Tips for Parents – National Coalition – John Splinter)

Do the parents make wise and virtue-centered choices about their own entertainment, including television, movies, reading material, and Internet?

It can no longer be "do as I say not as I do". We can't expect our children to learn by example if we don't provide the right modeling behavior.

Do the parents, both publicly and privately, model the kind of behavior they want their children to emulate?

"Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children. By knowing how to acknowledge their own failings to their children, parents will be better able to guide and correct them" (CCC 2223).

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