

KEEPING KIDS SAFE

A PARENTS' GUIDE

The Archdiocese of Washington is dedicated to promoting and ensuring the protection of all children. This flier is one in a series produced by the archdiocese to help parents better understand how to protect their children from victimization, both inside and outside the home. This guide explains how the archdiocese works to protect children in our parishes and schools.

Some signs that a child is being sexually abused:

- Suddenly refuses to change for gym or to participate in physical activities
- Reports nightmares or bedwetting
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite or behavior
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease, particularly if under age 14
- Runs away

Note: Victims of sexual abuse do not necessarily exhibit physical signs of the abuse and some sexually abused children may exhibit no signs of abuse at all.

Information from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

A long standing commitment to protecting children

The Archdiocese of Washington was one of the first dioceses in the nation to have a written Child Protection Policy, education on child protection and the first to use electronic fingerprinting for background checks. Our policy has become a model for dioceses nationwide and is available online at www.adw.org.



If you have worked with children in our parishes and schools, you know that any adult who has substantial contact with children must complete an application, be fingerprinted for a criminal background check and attend a child protection education workshop. The program used for these workshops, *Protecting God's Children for Adults*, is nationally recognized and held across the archdiocese throughout the year in English and Spanish.

Children in archdiocesan schools and religious education programs also receive education on how to recognize abuse and protect themselves. In fall 2008, *Touching Safety*, a safe environment program that has been successfully used in 50 other dioceses, was implemented as the core curriculum for schools and parishes. The program supports the teachings of the Catholic Church, has age-appropriate lessons and connects with the education for adults.

An archdiocesan Child Protection Advisory Board of lay experts (including at least one victim-survivor) monitors the archdiocese's outreach and compliance with the Child Protection Policy. In addition, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops audits all dioceses on their compliance with the U.S. Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. The auditors conduct interviews and review records and materials relating to education, background checks, compliance monitoring, reporting and healing. The archdiocese has been found in full compliance every year.

Since 1993, the archdiocese has had a Case Review Board to assist the Archbishop in assessing allegations of child sexual abuse against clergy and fitness for ministry.

Learn more about the Archdiocese of Washington's commitment to protecting children
www.adw.org • Office of Child Protection Services • 301-853-5328



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Help, healing and support for victims

The Archdiocese of Washington has long been committed to the treatment and healing of those harmed. These are some of the ways the archdiocese has reached out to victims of abuse by archdiocesan personnel:

- Apology and statement of remorse by a bishop and leadership.
- Immediate offer of paid counseling, therapy and other assistance (1) of an individual's choice, (2) for as long as needed to heal and (3) for family members, in some situations.
- Assistance regardless of legal claims. The archdiocese has paid for counseling even after being sued and even after the suit was thrown out of court on its merits, because we believe it is the right thing to do.
- Opportunity to meet with a bishop. Our bishops have traveled to meet with victims, provided them with a private phone number and e-mail, and set aside regular office time just for victims who would like to meet.
- Immediate reporting of allegations and support for victims in pursuing criminal prosecution.
- More than \$6 million in direct assistance has been provided to victims and millions more spent on prevention efforts. Settlements have been made, if appropriate in an individual's situation.
- Licensed clinical social worker on staff to assist those coming forward and Office of Child Protection Services to assist victims and implement prevention programs.



Reporting abuse

- If you suspect child abuse (sexual, physical or neglect of anyone under the age of 18) or have been a victim of child abuse, report it immediately to the local law enforcement agency or the local department of social services (Department of Child Protective Services in the District of Columbia).
- If you suspect child abuse involving any archdiocesan personnel, also report it immediately to Marcia Zvara, MSW, LCSW-C, Director of Child Protection Services for the Archdiocese of Washington, at 301-853-5328.
- The complete Child Protection Policy, which includes a form to report suspected abuse by archdiocesan personnel and details on where to report to civil authorities (Appendix A) is available online at www.adw.org.

By the numbers

Between July 2008 and June 2009 in the Archdiocese of Washington:

- **90** child protection workshops were held for adults who work with children in the archdiocese
- **5,400** people, including clergy, new employees and volunteers attended those workshops
- **16,952** Catholic school children received safe environment education
- **22,803** children in religious education programs received safe environment education
- **3,979** employees, volunteers and clergy were fingerprinted

Between 2003-2007 the Catholic Church in the United States:

- Trained more than 1.8 million clergy, employees and volunteers in parishes in creating safe environments and preventing child sexual abuse
- Prepared more than 5.8 million children to recognize abuse and protect themselves

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Always keep an up-to-date photo of your child

One of the most important tools for law enforcement in the case of a missing child is an up-to-date, good-quality photograph. The photograph should be a recent head-and-shoulders color photograph of the child in which the face is clearly seen. It should be of school-portrait quality, and the background should be plain or solid so it does not distract from the subject. When possible, the photograph should be in a digitized form and available on a compact disk (CD), as opposed to just a hard copy. The photograph should be updated at least every six months for children age six or younger, and then once a year, or when a child's appearance changes.

Top 10 safety tips for parents

1. **Know where each of your children is at all times.** Know your children's friends and be clear with your children about the places and homes they may visit.
2. **Never leave children unattended in a vehicle,** whether it is running or not. Also, remind children never to hitchhike, approach a vehicle or engage in a conversation with anyone in a vehicle they do not know or trust.
3. **Be involved in your children's activities.** You'll have a better opportunity to observe how the adults in charge interact with your children.
4. **Listen to your children.** Pay attention if they don't want to be with someone or go somewhere.
5. **Notice when anyone shows one or all of your children a great deal of attention or begins giving them gifts.** Talk to your children about the person and find out why that person is acting that way.
6. **Teach your children they have the right to say no** to any unwelcome, uncomfortable or confusing touch or actions by others and get out of those situations as quickly as possible. Teach them to loudly yell, "This person is not my father/mother/guardian" and tell you immediately if this happens.
7. **Be sensitive to any changes in your children's behavior or attitude.** Look and listen to small cues and clues indicating something may be troubling your children.
8. **Be sure to screen babysitters and caregivers.** Check the public registry for prior criminal records and sex offenses. Check references with other families who have used the caregiver and drop in unexpectedly to see how your children are doing.
9. **Practice basic safety skills with your children.** When out at a mall or park, have your children practice checking in with you, using pay phones, going to the restroom with a friend and locating adults who can help if they need assistance.
10. **Remember that there is no substitute for your attention and supervision.** Being available and taking time to really know and listen to your children helps build feelings of safety and security.



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Top Safety Tips

Talking to your children about safety

- Don't forget your older children—children age 11-17 are equally at risk of being victimized as younger children.
- Speak to your children in a calm, reassuring manner. They do not need to be frightened to get the point across.
- Speak openly about safety issues. If they feel you are comfortable discussing the subject matter, they may be more forthcoming to you.
- Do not confuse children with the concept of “strangers.” Children do not have the same understanding of who a stranger is as an adult might and danger to children is often much greater from someone they or you know.
- Find opportunities to practice “what if” scenarios to ensure your children understand what to do in different situations.
- Teach your children it is more important to get out a threatening situation than it is to be polite.



Tell your child:

- To always check with you or a trusted adult before going anywhere, accepting anything or getting in a car with anyone. This applies to older children as well.
- To always take a friend when they go places or play outside.
- It's okay to say no if someone tries to touch them or treats them in a way that makes them feel scared, uncomfortable or confused.
- They have the right to be safe. When needing help they should keep asking until they get the help they need.

The biggest myth...

Dangers from strangers is the biggest myth in child safety. In most cases, the perpetrator is someone the parents/guardians or children know, and this person may be in a position of trust or responsibility to a child and family.

How to check for registered offenders in your area

Find out if there are registered sex offenders living in your neighborhood, community or near your child's school or daycare by searching the state or national sex offender registries online.

In Maryland:

www.dpscs.state.md.us/sorSearch/

The Maryland registry allows users to search by type of offender, such as child sex offender, and see where they live on an interactive map.

In the District of Columbia:

<http://app.mpdc.dc.gov/SexOffenderRegistry.shtm>

Nationwide:

www.nsopr.gov

By the numbers

On average:

- **2,000** children a day are reported missing in the United States
- **200,000** children a year are abducted by family members
- **58,000** children a year are abducted by non-family members
- **115 children** are the victim of stereotypical kidnappings, where a child is abducted by someone they don't know who holds the child overnight, transports the child 50 miles or more, kills the child, demands ransom or intends to keep the child permanently
- **1 in 5** girls and **1 in 10** boys will be sexually victimized before adulthood
- **1 in 7** children online aged 10-17 receive a sexual solicitation over the internet

All information from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

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If you suspect your child is communicating with an offender

Talk openly with your child about your suspicions and the dangers of online offenders.

Review what is on your child's computer for pornography or any sexual communication.

Use the caller ID service to determine who is calling your child. Most telephone companies also allow you to block your number from appearing on someone else's caller ID.

Monitor your child's access to all types of online communication, such as chat rooms. Online offenders almost always meet potential victims in chat rooms then continue to communicate with them via email.

*Information from
U.S. Department of Justice, FBI*

Signs that your child might be at risk online

Your child spends large amount of time online, especially at night

Most children who fall victim to online offenders are online a lot, particularly in chat rooms in the evening.

You find pornography on your home computer

Sex offenders often supply their potential victims with pornography as a means of opening sexual discussions and for seduction. The child may hide the pornographic files on disks if the computer is used by family members.



Your child receives phone calls from adults you don't know or is making calls, sometimes long distance, to numbers you don't recognize

Most online offenders want to talk to the child on the telephone, often engaging in "phone sex" and seek to set up a meeting for real sex. Even if the child doesn't give out their telephone number, the offender can easily find it out using caller ID or asking them to call collect.

Your child receives mail or gifts from someone you don't know

As part of the seduction process, it is common for offenders to send letters, photographs and gifts to their potential victims. They have even sent plane tickets for a child to travel to meet in person.

Your child becomes withdrawn from the family

Online sex offenders will work hard to drive a wedge between a child and his or her family. They will accentuate any minor problems at home a child might have. The child may also become withdrawn after sexual victimization.

Your child is using an online account belonging to someone else

Online offenders will sometimes provide the child with a computer account for communications with the offender. The child may also meet an offender while online at a friend's house or at the library.

Information from U.S. Department of Justice, FBI.



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Don't let an online offender exploit your child

- Talk to your child about victimization and the dangers of online predators.
- Spend time with your child online and have him or her show you favorite web sites.
- Keep the computer in a common area of the house where you can monitor what your child is doing online.
- Use the parental controls provided by your internet service provider, but do not totally rely on them. You still need to be aware of your child's online activity. Use of chat rooms in particular should be heavily monitored.
- Maintain access to your child's online account and check his/her email. Do not be concerned about invading privacy. Be up front with your child about your access to his or hers online accounts and why.
- Teach your child about responsible use of the internet and that there is much more to it than chat rooms.
- Find out what computer safeguards are at your child's schools, the public library and their friend's homes.
- Understand that even if your child is a willing participant in sexual victimization, he or she is not at fault and is the victim.



Information from U.S. Department of Justice, FBI

Common online jargon

Blog: Short for web log. An online diary or journal readers can subscribe to.

Chatroom: An area on the internet where people can communicate in real time by typing messages back and forth.

Download: To copy a file from one computer system to another.

Instant Messaging (IM): Notifies you when someone on your private email list is online so you can start a real time chat session with them through text, voice or video.

Social networking: Online communities where you can create a profile page about yourself that may include photos and videos that others can see. The most popular sites are MySpace.com and Facebook.com.

Web cams: Small digital cameras that can be connected to a computer and used to communicate with others on video in real time.

By the numbers

1 in 7 youth online (10 to 17 years old) receive a sexual solicitation or approach over the internet.

4% receive an aggressive sexual solicitation - a solicitor who asked to meet them somewhere; called them on the telephone; or sent them offline mail, money, or gifts.

34% have unwanted exposure to sexual material -- pictures of naked people or people having sex.

27% of the youth who encountered unwanted sexual material told a parent or guardian. If the encounter was defined as distressing - episodes that made them feel very or extremely upset or afraid - 42% told a parent or guardian.

Information from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

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If you suspect your child is being cyber bullied:

- Teach your child not to respond to cyber bullies. Show them how to block the bully's messages and delete them without reading them.
- Tell your child he or she should never try and seek revenge on a bully or cyber bully.
- Remind your child to keep passwords a secret from everyone except you.
- Tell your child it's not their fault and you won't revoke their internet privileges if they are cyber bullied.
- Help your child keep a record of bullying incidents. If it involves threats and harassment or frequent cyber attacks, call the police to ensure your child's safety.

*Information from the
National Crime Prevention Council*

Bullying: Not just in the school yard anymore

Bullying does not just happen in school hallways or the school yard anymore. With so many teens using the internet to instant message friends, create blogs, set up profiles on social networking sites, share photos and text message on their cell phones, harassment has taken on a new form — cyber bullying.

Cyber bullies use email, instant messaging, cell phones and websites to spread rumors and gossip, steal passwords to assume someone else's identity, post pictures of someone without their consent and threaten or harass with offensive language.

Although cyber bullying does not inflict physical harm on a child, it is emotionally and psychologically damaging. It can be an extension of bullying that the child is experiencing at school and because the threats and taunts are online and visible to anyone 24 hours a day, it can feel like constant victimization. It is most prevalent among 15- and 16-year-old females.

Teen suicide, school shootings and physical bullying incidents are a few ways teens have chosen to handle the problem. Others keep to the bullying to themselves, sinking into depression that affects their grades, relationships and self-esteem.

Several cases of cyber bullying have made the news when the teenage victims committed suicide. In one well known case, Missouri teen Megan Meier, 13, hanged herself in her bedroom in 2006 after a fictitious 15-year-old boy she befriended through the social networking site MySpace turned hostile towards her.

The mother of a former friend of Megan's created the fictitious profile of the boy online in order to gain Megan's trust and learn what Megan was saying about her daughter. When the fictitious boy began sending cruel messages to Megan, she was so devastated she took her own life.

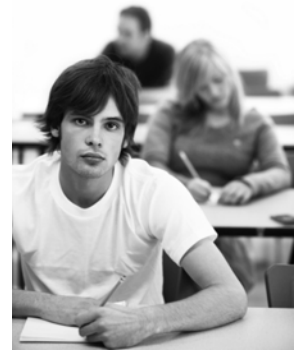


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Protect your child from cyber bullying

- Teach your child about cyber bullying and let him or her know that engaging in cyber bullying is unacceptable.
- Explain that teens who cyber bully sometimes bully because they have a feeling of anonymity and a lack of accountability; however, cyber bullying is harmful and has negative consequences.
- Explain that teens who cyber bully aren't always anonymous; they can be traced, located and punished if the bullying becomes harassment.
- Block cyber bullying messages through your internet service provider, social network site or chat room moderator; 71 percent of teens believe this is the most effective way to prevent cyber bullying.
- Encourage positive behavior. Make sure your child is not sending or posting text messages or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person.
- Get your child's school involved. Learn about the school's cyber bullying policy and urge administrators to take a stance against all forms of bullying.
- Keep computers in a highly trafficked room in the house where online activities are hard for teens to hide.
- Share examples of inappropriate incidents that can happen online, which teens may view as harmless or normal.
- Learn what your child is doing online and keep track of online behavior.
- Tell your child never to give out personal information online.



Information from the National Crime Prevention Council

For more information...

- **www.ncpc.org/cyberbullying**: National Crime Prevention Council website with cyber bullying and internet safety information for parents.
- **www.wiredsafety.org**: Internet safety information for children, teens and adults as well as a downloadable translator for cyber-lingo and acronyms used online and in text messages by teens.
- **www.cyberbully411.org**: Resources for youth who have questions about or have been targeted by online harassment, including a discussion forum.
- **www.cyberbullying.info**: Teens direct themselves on an interactive journey through a detective's office to learn more about cyber bullying, uncovering clues and information about cyber bullying and how to recognize what to do.
- **www.stopcyberbullying.org**: Cyber bullying prevention and internet safety information for parents, teachers, police officers and teens.

By the numbers

In a 2006 study of 824 students aged 13-17:

- **43%** had been victims of cyber bullying
- **81%** thought others cyber bullied because it was funny; **64%** thought the bully did it because they didn't like the person; and **45%** thought it was because the bully viewed the victim as a loser.
- **59%** said the cyber bully didn't think the action was a "big deal"
- **56%** of cyber bullying victims claim to have felt angry; **33%** reported feeling hurt; **32%** were embarrassed; and **13%** felt scared.
- **23%** were bullied by someone they don't know
- **45%** said cyber bullies didn't think they would get caught
- **11%** talked to their parents about incidents of cyber bullying

Information from the National Crime Prevention Council

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How can I monitor my child's cell phone use?

One program, called My Mobile Watchdog (mymobilewatchdog.org) allows parents and guardians to monitor all calls from and to the cell phone as well as text messages, e-mails, and picture messages. Parents can log into a website to view these communications and also set up a preapproved list of numbers that can be called from or can call into the phone.

There are other programs available so read reviews of them and explore your options before purchasing one and talk to your cell phone provider about ways they can help you monitor your child's cell phone use.

*Information from
www.Netsmartz411.org*

New trend more than just harmless fun

sexting (v): the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photos electronically, primarily between cell phones.

Have you checked your teen's cell phone lately to see the text messages he or she has been sending and receiving? If not, you might want to. A new trend - "sexting" - has been making news across the country as more and more teens are being caught by teachers and parents using their cell phones to send their boyfriends, girlfriends, classmates and even strangers nude or semi-nude photos of themselves and others. Sometimes the photos are accompanied by sexually explicit messages.

Teens may think their parents and teachers take "sexting" too seriously—that it's just harmless flirting, or that they sent the messages as a joke. But saying the suggestive text was sent as a joke misses the point. It is morally wrong, even illegal. The authorities can bring a charge of distributing child pornography, even if your teen is sending others pictures of him or herself.

In January 2009, three 13-year-old Pennsylvania girls were charged with child pornography after texting semi-nude photos of themselves to three male classmates. In October 2008, a Texas eighth-grader spent the night in a juvenile detention center after his football coach found an explicit picture on his cell phone that a fellow student sent him. In May 2009, Maryland Governor Martin O' Malley signed tougher penalties for the possession of child pornography -- a measure that could cover "sexting."

Also, teens may not realize that the pictures they are sending to one or two people are often forwarded to others, causing at best humiliation for the subject of the photos and at worst, ending up online being looked at by sexual predators.



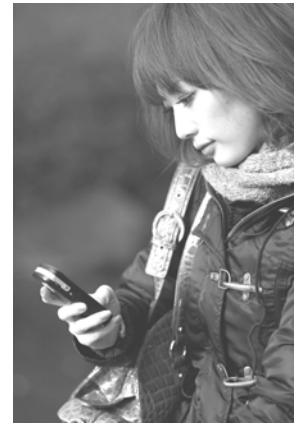
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Talk to your child about appropriate cell phone use

- Use a discussion about sexting to reinforce moral teaching on sexuality, healthy self-esteem and respect for self and others.
- Set clear expectations for using the cell phone. For example:
 - Tell your child who he or she may communicate with and when he or she may use the cell phone
 - No taking photos of anyone who is not fully dressed or is engaged in inappropriate behavior
 - No sending or forwarding of suggestive text messages
 - If your child receives a text that makes him or her uncomfortable, he or she must tell you right away
- Explain the consequences of misusing the cell phone for sexting, bullying or anything else inappropriate. Most teens with phones can't stand the thought of having that privilege taken away!
- Talk to your child's teacher and/or principal about how prevalent the problem is at school and what steps they are taking to try and prevent it. Make it clear that if your child is involved in any misuse of his or her cell phone at school that you want to be notified immediately.
- Remind your child that what they send using their cell phone may not remain private. The messages they send could get passed around, which may cause them a lot of humiliation.
- Let your child know he or she can come to you if they receive a text message that makes them uncomfortable. If your child can determine who sent the message, contact school administrators to let them know what's going on.
- Make sure your child understands that it is unlawful to send sexually explicit photos of minors via cell phones and online. Even if your child thinks of it as a joke and something "everyone is doing," your child can be charged with possession and distribution of child pornography.
- Purchase a phone that does not allow text messaging, does not have a camera and cannot connect to the internet. If you only want your child to have a phone for safety purposes, their phone does not need to have any of these features, which usually bump up the cost of the phone.

By the numbers

According to a recent study of teens age 13-19, **20 percent** have sent or posted nude or semi-nude photos or videos of themselves.

Who are they sending it to and why?

71 percent of teen girls have sent or posted this content to a boy or girl

51 percent of teen girls say they do it because of pressure from a guy

66 percent of teen girls and **60 percent** of teen boys do it to be "fun or flirtatious"

44 percent of teen girls and boys say did it in response to content they received

How does this impact teens?

44 percent of teen girls say that it is common for these images to be shared people not intended to see it

29 percent of teens say that exchanging explicit content makes them feel "expected" to date or hook up

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By the Numbers

Teens and Abuse

- **1 in 3** teenagers report knowing a friend or peer who has been hit, punched, kicked, slapped, choked or physically hurt by their boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Nearly **1 in 5** teenage girls who have been in a relationship said a boyfriend had threatened violence or self-harm if presented with a break-up.
- **13%** of teenage girls who said they have been in a relationship report being physically hurt or hit.
- **1 in 4** teenage girls who have been in relationships reveal they have been pressured to perform oral sex or engage in intercourse.
- More than **1 in 4** teenage girls in a relationship report enduring repeated verbal abuse.

Information from 2008 study by Teenage Research Unlimited

Helping your teen build healthy relationships

"Remember to share nicely with Katie."
"Hands are not for hitting, Tommy." Since your child was a toddler, you have been teaching him or her how to interact with their peers and family members. Now that your children are teenagers, guiding them towards healthy relationships with others requires different rules than it did when they were preschoolers. Adolescent children especially need to build healthy friendships and relationships, but helping them do so doesn't have to be a battlefield.



Here are some ways you can help your teen build healthy relationships:

- **Provide a safe and loving home environment.** Your child should feel comfortable bringing friends home, and her friends should feel welcome in your home. This gives you an ideal opportunity to observe your child's friends and spot troublesome relationships.
- **Teach responsibility.** Give appropriate amounts of independence and freedom. Do not instantly demand that your child end a relationship with which you are uncomfortable. Instead, choose a time to calmly express your concerns and gently remind your child about the boundaries and standards you have set for your family.
- **Resolve conflict.** Teach your child to respect other points of view. No relationship is without discord, and sometimes we have to lose the fight to win the relationship.
- **Be a good role model.** You are the most powerful example in your child's life. Let your child observe your own relationships, especially those that are long-standing—from junior high or your college days. Talk about your friendships openly—the good times and the not-so-good times, the ups and the downs.

Information from U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

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The warning signs of an unhealthy relationship

How to handle the ups and downs of adolescent dating is a challenge for any parent, just as it is for your teen. Your guidance is essential in helping your teen make the right dating choices, from recognizing the warning signs of an unhealthy relationship to educating your teen on Catholic moral teaching on chastity.

Talk to your teen about what an unhealthy relationship is: one that involves mean, disrespectful, controlling or abusive behavior, such as verbal insults, nasty putdowns, hitting and pressure to have a sexual relationship. For some who have grown up around this kind of behavior at home, it can almost seem normal or okay. Make sure your teen understands that it's not.

If you're wondering if your teen is in an unhealthy relationship, look for these **warning signs**:

- She apologizes for a boyfriend's behavior and makes excuses for him
- She loses interest in activities she used to enjoy
- She stops seeing friends and family members and become more isolated
- He calls her names and puts her down in front of other people
- He acts extremely jealous of others who pay her attention
- He controls her behavior, constantly checking up on her and asking who she's been with
- She casually mentions his violent behavior, but laughs it off as a joke
- She often has unexplained injuries or her explanations don't make sense

Information from www.loveisnotabuse.com

How to share Catholic moral teaching on chastity with your teen

- **Start a conversation today!** Talking to your child about chastity does not start with "the talk." It begins with spending time with your child and asking them about their day and life. Do this everyday and listen to their answers. A great time to do this is before bed every night.
- **Be not afraid.** Pray with and for your child. Say a prayer before speaking to your child about sexuality and ask the Holy Spirit to guide your discussions. Again this is not a one time talk; it is a series of discussions that take into account your child's thoughts, concerns and questions about sexuality as he or she matures.
- **Share with your child that sex is sacred.** Rarely will your child hear that sex is sacred and holy when expressed in marriage. Many teens use sex to try to keep relationships together, to overcome loneliness or to simply fit in. Let your child know that this is not what sex is for and that it will not make difficulties go away but will instead lead to other difficulties. Chastity may not always be easy, but it is always possible with God's help.
- **Talk to your child about chastity when they are young.** You know your child's maturity and questions better than anyone else. These early talks begin with developing virtues and a close relationship with God. Early lessons in virtue will bear great fruit later in life. Children learn best by example and will mirror loving and affectionate relationships. Teach your child that they have great dignity and worth and they were made for love and to love others, and most especially that you love them!
- **Chastity is not just about avoiding sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy.** While these are important reasons to abstain from sex, these are not the only reasons for abstinence before marriage. The beauty of marriage and family life, and the commitment to one another, will be lost if the reason for abstinence before marriage is simply to avoid pregnancy or disease. To the best of your ability, share the fullness of the beauty and holiness that sexuality can be when lived out in marriage.
- **Set clear rules in your home.** Children need healthy boundaries and clear guidelines of behavior. As parents, you set the standards (for discipline, dating, modesty, use of media, etc.). Once you set the rules, be consistent in enforcing them.