

Diocese of Rapid City

Keeping God's Children Safe

A Safe Environment Newsletter

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"Pornography consists in removing real or simulated sexual acts from the intimacy of the partners, in order to display them deliberately to third parties. It offends against chastity because it perverts the conjugal act, the intimate giving of spouses to each other. It does grave injury to the dignity of its participants (actors, vendors, the public), since each one becomes an object of base pleasure and illicit profit for others. It immerses all who are involved in the illusion of a fantasy world. It is a grave offense. Civil authorities should prevent the production and distribution of pornographic materials." - *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd ed. Paragraph 2254.*

9 Conclusions to Be Parents in a Porn Culture.

by Jason Kidd, Director of the Marriage and Family Life Office; Archdiocese of Portland, OR.

This upcoming school year, our family transitions to all our children in school full-time. My two oldest, both daughters, will both be in middle school. With over a decade of experience in youth ministry, I have some idea of the challenges that lie ahead. The area I am most concerned about is technology in the hands of kids with always-everywhere access to the Internet.

Pew's 2018 research study on Teens (13 to 17 years of age), Social Media, and Technology found that 95% of teens report they have a smartphone or access to one. This access has greatly increased the use of the Internet, with 45% of teens reporting they are online "on a near-constant basis." This includes apps, social media, and unfortunately pornography. With our teens online at such a rate, the question we must consider as parents is not "if" my child has been exposed to pornography, rather, "when".

Seeing this reality, my wife and I realized we had to start the sexuality conversation early, integrating the physical, social, and spiritual perspectives. We have had several conversations with each of our children, although each conversation looks differently and is age-appropriate for that child.

When my 6th-grade daughter found the book, *Every Parents Battle: A Family Guide to Resisting Pornography* by Dan S. Spencer III in my car, I was given the opportunity to discuss this honestly with her. Although I wasn't prepared for that question at that moment, I am so thankful that we had lines of communication open, she trusted me to ask, and we were able to have a conversation and speak the truth.

Beginning the Conversation with Children

Here are helpful ways we navigate these important conversations with our children. Whether you are just starting the "birds and the bees" talks, the "sex" talks, or the pornography talks, I hope these will encourage you:

Encouragement 1: **Pray**

Ask the Holy Spirit for His wisdom. Ask for the opportunity to talk to your children. Ask the Lord to give you courage.

Encouragement 2: **Start Early**

You can begin the sexuality conversation with your young child, simply... "Mom and dad loved each other so much, God gave us you as a baby". As they mature, the conversation should as well. The book, *Wonderfully Made! Babies* by Ellen Giangiorano is a good resource for ages 9 and up. (I suggest using the book as a guide, as you lead the conversation).

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Diocese of Rapid City Safe Environment

www.rapidcitydiocese.org/safe-environment/

USCCB Office of Child and Youth Protection

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/index.cfm>

For all that is in the world, sensual lust, enticement for the eyes, and a pretentious life, is not from the Father but is from the world.

- I John 2:16

Encouragement 3: **Don't Wait**

Get started today. If you don't teach them, they will be taught by the culture, the internet, and their friends. [Sign up for Covenant Eyes](#) to begin teaching the importance of accountability online and offline.

Encouragement 4: **Relax**

It's normal for your children to be curious about sexuality. They don't bring the baggage you might have on the topic unless someone else has started the conversation before you. What does the Catholic Church teach about our bodies, human sexuality, and pornography? Read [Equipped: Smart Catholic Parenting in a Sexualized Culture](#).

Encouragement 5: **Lead with Beauty**

Sex is more than just a "no" or "don't do that." It's about pointing toward the beauty God created in our sexuality and growing in holiness. It is a gift and has a unique purpose within matrimony. What does beauty have to do with it? Read [Transformed by Beauty](#).

Encouragement 6: **Ask Questions**

Be empathetic and invite a conversation, not a lecture. "What are you hearing at school?" "What questions do you have?" "How can I help?" "Have you seen a photo that made you uncomfortable? When/Where?" How do you have a conversation about pornography with your child? Read [Confident: Helping Parents Navigate Online Exposure](#). (see section boxed section at right)

Encouragement 7: **Teachable Moments**

It's not about "The Talk," but rather a series of age-appropriate conversations as they grow up. Make sure you reiterate God's love for them, your love for them, and God's mercy, which is new every day.

Encouragement 8: **Get Educated**

Get online and learn for yourself. Saint John Paul II's *Theology of the Body* is an antidote to ambiguity the culture offers. There are also many Catholic blogs and apostolates that speak on this. What is the *Theology of the Body*? Start by reading [Theology of the Body: Sex and the Meaning of Life](#).

Encouragement 9: **Proactively Protect Them**

It's imperative to set up boundaries, including accountability and filters on all internet devices. However, this will only go so far. **It's not a matter of if your child will see pornography, it's only a matter of when.** So make sure each conversation includes, "when you encounter pornography, make sure to come to talk to me that same day".

Pray, Prepare and Begin

What are some other pointers you would add to this list? When it comes to talking to our kids about sensitive issues, it can seem overwhelming. The key is to pray, prepare, and begin the conversation.

Written by Jason Kidd, Director of the Marriage and Family Life Office; Archdiocese of Portland, OR. *9 Conclusions to Be Parents in a Porn Culture*; Aug. 5, 2019. This blog may be viewed at: <https://cleanheart.online/parents>

NOTE: use CNTL + Click on *italicized text* in sections above to go electronically to that source; many can be downloaded/printed. This newsletter may be found at: <https://www.rapidcitydiocese.org/safe-environment/>

RESOURCES

Create a Clean Heart Online. <https://cleanheart.online>

Covenant Eyes. <https://www.covenanteyes.com>

Protect Young Minds. <https://www.protectyoungminds.org/2016/03/24/protect-young-minds-practical-tools/>

Integrity Restored. <https://integrityrestored.com>

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd ed. *Pornography*; paragraphs 2211, 2354, 2396.

Searches may also be done online for many resources on the topic of "The Theology of the Body" / St. John Paul II

Confident: Helping Parents Navigate Online Exposure



Description

When a parent discovers his or her child or teenager has been looking at pornography, it can be alarming, hurtful, even frightening. *Confident* provides a full step-by-step guide for parents who want to navigate these uncharted waters.

Audience: Parents

Language: English and Spanish

Resource Type: Ebook

Cost: Free download or \$2 per hard-copy

[Read Confident Online](#)