



Child & Teen Safety

Parent Inservice Material

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Some of you may or may not remember that question. It started in the '60s and was asked right before the nightly news. Many parents are now very aware of the need to know where their children are and would answer without hesitation. We have learned the importance of knowing where our children are and who they are with. However, many times, parents fail to realize that even though their kids are physically at home, they may be socializing with others on the internet and the parents do not even know it.

Times have really changed and instead of just having to worry about where your kids are physically and who they are talking to, parents now have to be concerned about where they are in the cyber world and who they are talking to. We can't afford to make the assumption that the sites they are visiting are safe. The internet never closes!!

To that end, the *United State Conference of Catholic Bishops* (USCCB) and the *Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America* (GOA) have jointly developed a website called



Faith and Safety: Technology Safety Through the Eyes of Faith
<https://faithandsafety.org/>



where you can find...

Simple, straightforward practical help for families about digital safety.

Guidance for looking at technology through the eyes of faith.

Guidance on some optional tools and resources helpful to protect you family from unsolicited and unwanted content.

Parents - did you know ??

The most effective internet tool is you!! No technology, no piece of software, no parental control is ever a substitute for **active, involved and loving parenting**. Every gadget, game and online experience is a starting point for conversation about navigating the digital world. These conversations are fundamental to your kids' formation toward responsible and faithful adulthood. In addition to the assistance you will find at the website listed above, you will find tips on the next page to enable you to be a good listener to your child.

Material above from <https://faithandsafety.org>

Good Listening Skills

L Listen with your mind, heart and body.

Pay attention. Resist distracting thoughts. Open your heart. Position yourself at the same eye level. If possible, do not cross your arms or appear "closed off".

I Identify the feeling(s) from the context of the speakers' statement(s).

Help speaker identify his/her feelings.

Example: "Was that difficult/frustrating/exciting/challenging/painful/a relief... for you?"

S Safeguard periods of silence.

It is tempting to quickly fill periods of silence. Allow the speaker to think about what he/she wants to say next or to simply hear what they have already said.

T Tend the conversation by showing that you are following the conversation.

Use appropriate listening sounds, nods, brief statements to let the speaker know you are listening.

E Engage. Use reflective listening by restating what you think the person wants you to know.

Paraphrase what you think is the main point(s) the speaker wants to express. Example: "It sounds like you're being pulled in a lot of directions between school, sports, Religious Education, homework, responsibilities around the house and having time with your friends. Is this getting stressful for you?"

N Never project your own thoughts, feelings, attitudes, opinions, etc. into what the speaker is communicating.

Keep the focus on the speaker. Do not turn their story into your story. Save your story, thoughts and feeling for an appropriate time for you to be the speaker.

- Being a good listener does not necessarily mean that we agree with everything the speaker is saying.
- Being a good listener does not compromise our authority with children/youth or subordinate adults in the workplace.
- Being a good listener respects the dignity of the person we are communicating with, regardless of their age.
- Being a good listener helps establish healthy relationships based on mutual respect.

Good communication establishes solid ground to stand on when our relationships encounter challenging situations.

Material adapted from the dioceses of Albany and Fresno with permission.