

Keeping Children and Teens **SAFE ONLINE**

Computers and mobile devices can be helpful tools for children and teens to learn and grow in faith and fellowship. Unfortunately, the digital world is also full of unsafe and explicit content. You wouldn't hand a teen the car keys without first teaching them how to drive. The same should be true for using technology—teach them how to keep themselves and others safe while using it.

You can use the following tips to better protect young people from harm online:



- 1 Model appropriate online behavior for young people.** Children look to their parents to teach and show them the ways to appropriately use technology. The biggest influence on what children see as acceptable or unacceptable is you.
- 2 Teach your children not to share private information or images online.** Strangers posing as online friends can try to gain the trust of minors. Personal information such as name, address, and phone number should never be shared with an unknown person. Tell your children to immediately tell a trusted adult if anyone makes them feel uncomfortable.
- 3 Limit usage of computers and mobile devices to public spaces in the home.** Not only will this help to prevent young people from accessing unsafe websites, it will also help them to develop safe browsing habits later in life.
- 4 Install software that can block or monitor explicit website use.** Open access to harmful websites, like those that include pornography, is a constant threat to

young people. Website filters can prevent access to harmful and explicit sites and some can even alert you when such a site is accessed.

- 5 Review and discuss the websites your child has visited and apps they have used.** Oversight of your child or teen's browsing history and app usage can help to keep them safe online. If you notice your child has browsed an unsafe website or app, discuss why that behavior is harmful. Learn about current apps that could be harmful to children and teenagers, especially those that involve image sharing, private communication, or the illusion of privacy.
- 6 Report online exploitation of minors to public authorities.** If you become aware of explicit content involving minors, such as solicitation, explicit images or videos, you should submit a report to law enforcement or through resources like CyberTipline from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.





A PRAYER FOR HEALING VICTIMS OF ABUSE

God of endless love,
ever caring, ever strong,
always present, always just:
You gave your only Son
to save us by his blood on the cross.



Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace,
join to your own suffering
the pain of all who have been hurt
in body, mind, and spirit
by those who betrayed the trust placed in them.



Hear the cries of our brothers and sisters
who have been gravely harmed,
and the cries of those who love them.
Soothe their restless hearts with hope,
steady their shaken spirits with faith.
Grant them justice for their cause,
enlightened by your truth.



Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts,
heal your people's wounds
and transform brokenness into wholeness.
Grant us the courage and wisdom,
humility and grace, to act with justice.
Breathe wisdom into our prayers and labors.
Grant that all harmed by abuse may find peace in justice.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.