



Family and School Association Newsletter

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February – the Month of Love

Pope Francis has been very explicit and frequently refers to the fact that we must love everyone and go out of our way to show that love – to our family members, to our friends and acquaintances, to our neighbors, to the elderly, the poor and even to our enemies. Love entails going out of our way to be supportive and kind even when it is difficult. It is hard to be loving when a baby is screaming incessantly, when a child has spilt sugar cereal and milk on a brand clean floor, when a driver is being dangerously rude, when a co-worker is being unnecessarily critical, when a homeless person is dirty. But that is exactly when Pope Francis is telling us to love. It's easy to love when the recipient is kind and loving themselves, but that is not a test of our character; that's just a happy response.

February, the month of Valentine's Day, is a perfect time to practice the kind of love to which the Lord and the Pope are calling us.

Establish a Positive Relationship with Your Child's Teacher

The above statement seems so obvious that one might think it need not be addressed. Unfortunately, many parents and guardians for one reason or another do not feel comfortable establishing a relationship with their child's teacher. Research indicates that the more a teacher knows about a child, the better that teacher can understand how to best teach that child. If you do not have a true relationship with your child's teacher, try some of the following:

- Call the teacher and say something positive about the teacher (no matter what the situation). Say that you want to get to know the teacher better and ask a question about something your child has said about a school directive or a homework issue.
- Follow up in a day or two with an email or a tweet thanking the teacher for taking time to speak with you.
- Volunteer to assist in some way that will be helpful to the teacher and fits your schedule
- Make an in-person visit – separate from the arranged parent/teacher meeting – either spontaneous when you pick up your child or pre-scheduled.

Note: Don't overdo your efforts and be sure to make them short and to the point.

More Information about Internet Safety

According to our Virtus training – the Archdiocese’s chosen program for child safety – the internet is getting an increase in predators using technology to harm children. The term that is being used is sextortion. It happens when an adult coerces a youth to produce and send sexually explicit images or videos over the internet. The adult threatens to distribute the material unless the child goes along with their demands. The predators can be relentless and groom and coerce constantly. While this subject is distasteful, it needs to be taken seriously. Parents and guardians need to realize that it is easier than we think for young people to become victims of sextortion and other forms of abuse. The predators pretend they are the age of the victim, they compliment the victim, gain their trust and go from there. By the time the child realizes that something is not right, they frequently are afraid to say anything because the predator has convinced them that they are at fault.

What’s to be done?

- Monitor your child’s internet frequently – you have that right and obligation
- Talk to your child about the possibility of sextortion, no matter how difficult this discussion might be
- Speak regularly about internet activities and risks
- Let your child know they can talk to you about anything, no holds barred
- Tell your child that pictures should never be shared with someone known only on the internet
- Remind your child that nothing is private on the internet despite promises by a person or program.
- Don’t be ashamed to call the FBI at 1-800-CALL-FBI or 1-800-843-5678, the National Center for Missing or Exploited Children if you believe your child has been exploited

Lent is on the Way

This is just a reminder that Lent needs to be taken seriously and efforts made to be sure your family is aware that the Lord suffered and died to atone for our sins – every one of us. Then he rose from the dead to fulfill his own promise and Easter is the greatest celebration of our Christian Catholic faith.

- Go to church more often
- Do the Stations of the Cross with your children at your parish
- Say grace before meals
- Talk about Lent and let the children choose a service project
- Do night prayers with your children

May your Lent be fruitful and faith filled!