Safe **E**nvironment of the **A**rchdiocese

Did a child get a new cell phone?

More than likely a number of young people, who might not have had one before, received a cell phone for Christmas. Giving a young person a cell phone can open up a host of additional behaviors because today's phones allow us to do so many different things. When children receive a cell phone, it is important to discuss the following topics with them, assuming, of course, they are of appropriate age:

*Distracted driving: Distracted driving can be deadly. Kids should understand that texting, answering email, surfing the web, or any other cell phone activity can cause a deadly accident. If they need to use a cell phone, teach them to pull over.

*Cheating: Cheating in class isn't just copying and passing notes any more. Cell phones ae used to cheat in school. Openly talk to young people about the ethics of cheating and the temptation the cell phone could present.
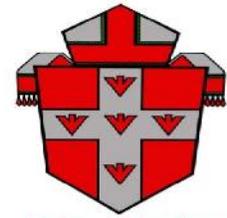
*Sexting: Sexting is sending a sexually explicit text, photo, or video via text messaging. Sexting photos or videos are frequently shared and don't stay solely with the intended recipient. A young person's reputation can be damaged for life. Peer pressure can lead a kid to sexting. Talk to kids about the dangers of sexting, peer pressure and immediately reporting any sexting.

*Cyberbullying: Cyberbullying is bullying with electronic media—cell phones included. Kids can be both victims and bullies. Talk to them about what to do if they are bullied and remind them not to bully others.

*Geolocation: Geolocation uses your cell phone to determine your exact location in real time. Approximately 18% of adult cell phone users use geosocial services to "check-in" to places. Children thirteen and under should never use geolocation services to reveal their current location. Teach them about appropriate and inappropriate use of these services and how they can invite predators and compromise the family's safety and security.

(Taken from: https://faithandsafety.org)

Teach responsible use of the cell phone

Go Make Disciples

When children are given a cell phone, they should be taught to use it responsibly..

When a parent gives the child a phone, they are giving them a portable computer with mobile internet capability. They should know the phone's features and capabilities.

Several of the items in this newsletter are meant to be shared with parents. Hopefully you will do that!

Timely Tips for Using Apps with Kids (taken from onguardonline.gov/blog

Six Things to Know and Do:

No doubt, kids will use apps on their phone, tablet or e-reader. Many apps are fun, educational and engaging. But before you hand over your mobile device to a youngster:

1) Try out the apps your child wants to use so you're comfortable with the content and the features.

2) Use the device and app settings to restrict a kid's ability to download apps, make purchases within an app or access additional material.

3) Consider turning off your wi-fi and carrier connections using "airplane mode" to disable any interactive features, prevent inadvertent taps and block access to material that you think is inappropriate or just don't want.

4) Look for statements about whether the app or anything within the app collects kids' personal information—and whether they limit sharing, using or retaining the information. If you can't find those assurances, choose another app.

5) Check on whether the app connects to social media, gaming platforms or other services that enable sharing photos, video or personal information, or chatting with other players. Then determine whether you can block or limit those connections.

6) Talk to your kids about the restrictions you set for downloading, purchasing and using apps; tell them what information you're comfortable sharing through mobile devices, and why.

What's a mobile app?

A mobile app is a software program you can download and access directly using your phone or another mo-

Want to know more?

The FTC has released a new report on mobile apps for kids. Following up on a previous report, the survey found, among other things, that many apps included interactive features, or sent information from the mobile device to ad networks, analytics companies, or other third parties, without disclosing the practices to parents.

www.onguardonline.gov

There are now more activated cell phones than there are people in the US.

The average age for a kid's first cell phone is just 11 years old.

77% of kids 12-17 have a cell phone.

Cell phones are the primary source of communication for teens.

They send more texts in a month than they do phone calls.

Cell phones need to be a primary focus for safety.

Questions to Ask About the Phone

What capabilities does the mobile phone have? Find out if the device can access the internet, send email, take pictures or videos, and download music, movies or apps.

Can any of the mobile phone's capabilities be selectively disabled or turned off? Can you disable the camera, internet access, YouTube, or other features? Can you set ratings for music and movie access?

What is included in the cell phone plan? Find out if text messaging, email, internet access, app store access are included. Find out what additional features may be activated at a later time from the device without your explicit authorization. Likewise, find out what features have a limit. If you go over that limit, what will you end up paying?

Are there parental controls and restrictions available for this device? What does your cell phone provider offer for selectively restricting calling, texting, time of day usage, and other features for the device? How can you selectively turn on those restrictions? How can you view reports? If you enable any filters or controls, how can you prevent them from being circumvented? Will the store help you setup any parental controls and teach you how to keep them effective going forward?

Does the phone have a GPS (also called location services)? If so, are those location services enabled by default? Do they tag photos with the time and place where they were taken? Can you use the location services securely to find the location of the phone in an emergency?

These are helpful questions for parents to ask!

Technology Safety Through the Eyes of Faith

This is a resource guide brought to us by a collaboration between:

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (www.usccb.org) and

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (www.goarch.org)

Quick Links:

How to Use This Site (https://faithandsafety.org/how-to-use-this-site)

At Least Read This (https://faithandsafety.org/at-least-read-this)

Terms of Use (https://faithandsafety.org/terms-of-use)

Check out this site for tips:

on the use of :

Facebook

Twitter

Instagram

and other sites often used by young people as their primary means of communication.

If we are going to keep youth safe we must be aware of and familiar with these sites and how to navigate through them.

Just a Few Reminders:

If you haven't already done so, January is the third time to publish the **parish bulletin insert**. You may find the insert announcement in your <u>Manual</u>, Section VII, page 2.

Sometime in January, the parish will be receiving the **quarterly statement for background checks** and reruns of background checks. Please ask the person who pays this bill to make the check payable to the Archdiocese of OKC and send it to the attention of: Rose Mary Story, Data Base Administrator.

It is not too early to begin thinking about your "**Parish Compliance Survey".** The form will be sent to all facilitators in early March. To review the form go to the <u>Manual,</u> Section VI, pages 2-6. These are the numbers that you will be asked for this audit year.