

Raising Faith-Filled Children in a Digital Age

As Catholic parents and educators, we share the responsibility of forming children not only academically, but spiritually and emotionally. Technology can be a gift, but when overused or misused, it becomes a threat to their mental health, relationships, and innocence. This handout summarizes key points from our Back-to-School Night conversation and provides resources for protecting your child in today's digital world.

Why Technology Matters

- Technology can be a valuable tool for learning, communication, and even evangelization.
- However, smartphones and social media—especially introduced too early—have been linked to rising levels of anxiety, depression, and loneliness among young people.
- Jonathan Haidt, in his book *The Anxious Generation*, shows that teen depression has doubled and suicidal ideation among teen girls has risen nearly 150% since 2010 (the rise of smartphones and social media).

Recommendations for Parents

- Delay giving children a smartphone until at least **8th grade**.
- If a phone is necessary, choose safer alternatives like a **TracFone** or **Gabb phone**.
- Require all devices to be turned off and signed out of by **8:00 PM nightly**.
- Monitor **group chats and text threads**, which can foster gossip, exclusion, and bullying.
- Model healthy digital habits as parents—limit your own screen time and prioritize family connection.

Catholic Perspective

- Our children's minds and bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). What they consume shapes their souls.
- Romans 12:2 reminds us: 'Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.'
- True formation comes from prayer, family meals, rest, service, and play—not endless scrolling.
- As parents, we are called to courageously guard innocence and guide our children toward holiness.

Together, let us give our children the gift of a childhood anchored in faith, not in screens. We can form saints, not just students, by protecting their joy, their peace, and their mental health. Thank you for your partnership and trust in Catholic education.