

## Family Life in the Age of the Smartphone:

Free Archdiocesan resources to support parents, strengthen Catholic identity, and improve engagement.

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### A workshop to be offered to Catholic School Principals

#### Learner will be able to access resources that:

1. Explain how the Office of Marriage and Family Life (MFL) can support Principals in engaging parents as first teachers of their children.
  2. Motivate parents to help children 1) understand the human person; 2) participate in the sacraments; and 3) go deeper in prayer
  3. Communicate to their Pastor how the school is strengthening Catholic Identity and engaging school families more effectively in the life of the parish
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1. Parents should take the initiative as first teachers
    - A. It is as important now as it ever was for parents to speak up
      - a. Children need their parents to communicate a message of compassion, mercy and unconditional love
      - b. Between 2008 and 2017 teens and pre-teens experienced a 62% increase in depression without a corresponding increase in other age groups.<sup>1</sup>
      - c. The ubiquity of smartphones and tablets exposes children to dangerous content at early ages
        - i. 48% of 11-16 year olds surveyed had seen pornography online<sup>2</sup>
        - ii. Children were most likely to have seen pornography online accidentally<sup>3</sup>
      - d. Technology can powerfully influence children's brain development and parents need to monitor their use of technology to ensure that influence is benign
    - B. Parents exercise the greatest influence over their children's decisions about sexuality<sup>4</sup>
    - C. Parents who speak to their children demonstrably influence their behavior for the good<sup>5</sup>
    - D. Parents are more likely to speak to their children if they have help and encouragement
    - E. Children who are part of a faith community are more likely to follow parent's guidance regarding sex and marriage<sup>6</sup>
    - F. A school that helps its parents perform this duty enhances its Catholic Identity and supports the Pastor's mission to evangelize

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<sup>1</sup> Study from SDSU by Twenge et. al. cited in Seattle Times March 17, 2019 "More U.S. adolescents and young adults in the late 2010s, versus the mid-2000s, experienced serious psychological distress, major depression or suicidal thoughts, and more attempted suicide," said lead author Jean Twenge, PhD, author of the book "iGen" and professor of psychology at San Diego State University. "These trends are weak or non-existent among adults 26 years and over, suggesting a generational shift in mood disorders instead of an overall increase across all ages." <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/03/190315110908.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Fight the New Drug website

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy With One Voice: America's Adults and Teens Sound Off About Teen Pregnancy: December 2004

<sup>5</sup> "Ask your father and he will tell you" A Report on American Catholic Religious Parenting Justin Bartkus and Christian Smith University of Notre Dame 2017

<sup>6</sup> Kara Powell, Sticky Faith 2011

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2. Parents can be prepared to teach their children an understanding of the human person, engage them in the sacraments, and lead them to a deeper relationship with Christ
  - A. The message always has to start with encouragement and hope
  - B. The three pillars for this formation include:
    - a. An understanding of the Human Person
    - b. Participation in the sacraments
    - c. Growth in the spiritual life
  - C. The material in the presentation 'Good News about Sex and Marriage' introduces parents to foundational information about the Human Person. Principals can be trained to provide this content or the Office of Marriage and Family Life can provide speakers at no charge.
  - D. Participation in the sacraments leads to habits of life and faith that lead to good decisions about sex and marriage.
  - E. Growth in the spiritual life can happen through simple repeatable behaviors
    - a. Prayer before meals
    - b. Prayer at bedtime
    - c. Time of silence and contemplation
    - d. Opportunities for spiritual growth through participation in parish life
  - F. Parents can teach children these behaviors without a sophisticated understanding of theology.
3. Principals can provide this support to parents at no cost by using the following resources
  - A. Resources for principals on the Marriage and Family Life website:  
<https://marriagefamilylife.seattlearchdiocese.org>
    - a. Key principles that define the Human Person
    - b. Archbishop Sartain's booklet *Everything I Have is Yours* which helps explain the meaning of the Sacrament of Marriage
    - c. The Kids and Technology page which provides parents what they need to manage screen time and online safety at home
  - B. Other principals who have successfully hosted parent formation nights
  - C. Speakers available for parent formation events at no charge
  - D. Tips for a successful parent formation event