

*Families and Media* is a project of the English Sector Episcopal Commission for Social Communications of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB). The project's purpose is to help families navigate through the various forms of media found in the home, and to provide parents, teens and younger children with references to obtain valuable background information.

### Suggested bulletin insert #2

#### **Families and the Internet**

The Internet has quickly found a place in most Canadian homes. A recent survey indicated that 94% of Canadian school children from Grade 4 until the end of high school log onto the Internet from home. The Internet is used for socializing, downloading and carrying out research for school projects. As with any of today's modern forms of media, parents need to know how their children are using the Internet, what information they are receiving and what information they are giving out. This is especially important for the protection of privacy, the safety of individuals, and for ensuring a proper moral education for children in a secular world.

#### **Ten Tools for Families and Internet Use**

- Always place the family computer in a high traffic area, such as the kitchen, the living room or the family room, where it is easy to monitor your children's Internet use.
- When you pass the computer, stop to chat with your child about the sites they visit and what they find interesting about them. Get to know your child's surfing habits.
- Sit down with your child at the computer as often as you can. Help them to navigate the web easily and safely. Teach them good surfing rules and habits.
- Limit the amount of time your children use the Internet and give older children more Internet privileges. Don't allow your children to monopolize the computer constantly.
- If your children are doing research, teach them how to search for verifiable information, and teach them how to confirm the information they obtain.
- Instil in your children the need to keep personal information private. Tell them not to provide any identifying information unless you approve doing so beforehand.
- Make children aware that strangers on the Internet can be as dangerous as strangers on the street. Tell children to come and get you if anyone online is making them feel uncomfortable.
- Make your children understand that personal friendships are much more important than anonymous online friendships.
- Discuss "downloading" music, television programs, movies and computer software. Make children aware that so-called "free" downloads often contain viruses or cookies that may result in computer crashes.
- Know your children's Internet friends as well as you know their school and neighbourhood friends.

## **Additional Resources on the Internet for Families**

**The Parents' Guide to the Information Superhighway** – Rules and Tools for Families Online – A guide for parents who have begun to see that computers and online services will be or already are a part of children's lives at school, community centres, home, or the library, and who are looking for guidelines and advice. It is written with the computer novice in mind and provides simple definitions and ideas about how to get involved.

<http://www.childrenspartnership.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Technology&CONTENTID=4687&TEMPLATE=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm>

**Parent's Guide to Online Kids** – This presentation provides statistics on children's use of the Internet and arms parents with knowledge of the different programs their children may be using, alerts parents to potential Internet risks, and provides tips on Internet safety.

<http://www.childrenspartnership.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Speeches and Presentations&CONTENTID=9071&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm>

**The NetSmartz Workshop** is an interactive, educational safety resource to teach children and teens how to stay safe on the Internet. NetSmartz combines the newest technologies available and the most current information to create high-impact educational activities that are well received by even the most tech-savvy kids.

<http://www.netsmartz.org/>

### **Helping Kids Use the Internet Safely**

[http://www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/health\\_safety/web\\_safety\\_for\\_kids\\_teen.shtml](http://www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/health_safety/web_safety_for_kids_teen.shtml)

### **Safety on the Internet**

<http://www.chatmag.com/help/safety.html>

### **Media Awareness Network (Canada) – The Internet**

<http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/parents/internet/index.cfm>

### **Catholic Organization for Life and Family**

*The Media: A Fascinating Challenge for the Family*

<http://www.colf.ca>

For more information, contact the English Sector Episcopal Commission for Social Communications at [cecc@cccb.ca](mailto:cecc@cccb.ca). This document is available online at [www.cccb.ca](http://www.cccb.ca).

This text may be reproduced in whole or in part without charge.

Copyright © Concacan Inc., 2007.

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops – 2500 Don Reid Drive, Ottawa ON K1H 2J2