

***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 #5

Families and Television

Children grow up with television as a part of the family home. Television has become as much a part of daily family life as meals, homework, and household chores. Television in itself is neither good nor bad. It is a technology that has both good and bad associated with it. It is up to parents to teach their children how to make discriminating viewing choices and to ensure that they use television appropriately.

Ten Tools for Families and Television Viewing

- Make television viewing a topic around the dinner table. Discuss which programs your children want to watch and guide them to choose quality programs. Make their program choices age appropriate.
- Spend time watching television together as a family, giving careful attention to the type of programs your children are watching.
- Use commercial time to discuss what has happened in the previous 10 to 15 minutes. Look for values to discuss. Listen to your children's opinions about what has happened in the program up to that point.
- Place limits on television watching during the week, with slightly relaxed rules for the weekends, but let your children decide what they will watch based on previously discussed programs.
- Set an example for television viewing by the programs they see you watch.
- If your children go to a friend's house for any length of time, ask what programs they may have watched and what they thought of them.
- Discuss with your children how television programs work, and how TV ratings determine what programs television networks broadcast.
- Discuss how most television programming is fictional and not real life.
- Discuss how most reality television programs are not "reality" in the strict sense of the word, and how they appeal to greed and power.
- Help your children understand the purpose and intent of television advertising.

Additional Resources on Television for Families

Media Awareness Network – Special Issues for Young Children

http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/parents/television/issues_children_tv.cfm

Media Awareness Network – Talking to your Kids about Television

http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/parents/television/talking_to_kids_tv.cfm

Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission – A Canadian Agenda for Children’s Television

<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/ENG/SOCIAL/AGENDA.htm>

University of Michigan Health system – What I Need to Know about Children and Television

<http://www.med.umich.edu/1libr/yourchild/tv.htm>

Kidshealth.org -- How TV Affects your Child

http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/positive/family/tv_affects_child.html

National Institute on Media and the Family – Children and Television

http://www.mediafamily.org/facts/facts_childandtv.shtml

Canadian Child Care Federation – Managing the Television at Home

http://www.cfc-efc.ca/docs/cccf/rs039_en.htm

Media Literacy Review – Television and Children

<http://interact.uoregon.edu/Medialit/mlr/readings/articles/tvpitze.html>

American Academy of Pediatrics – Television: Positive Actions for Parents

http://www.medem.com/search/article_display.cfm?path=n:&mstr=/ZZZRC31PQ7C.html&soc=AP&srch_typ=NAV_SERCH

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. This document is available online at www.cccb.ca.

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