PARENT INFORMATION

100 N. 62nd St.
Omaha, NE 68132

ARCHDIOCESE of OMAHA

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

Supported by the Annual Appeal

402.558.3100
402.551.4212 (FAX)
www.archomaha.org

October 23, 2009

Mary Beth Hanus
Victim Assistance Coordinator
P.O. Box 4130
Omaha, NE 68104-0130

Dear Mary Beth,

After reviewing the "Circle of Grace" curriculum that is taught in our Archdiocesan schools and parish religious education programs, grades K-12, I would like to thank you and the GRACES committee for your role in its implementation.

This curriculum is a vital element in keeping our young people protected, and affirms them as proud children of God.

With this letter, I hereby confirm the promulgation of my predecessor for the "Circle of Grace" curriculum for grades K-12 in the Archdiocese of Omaha, and mandate that it continue to be utilized in all schools and religious education programs this coming school year and hereafter.

With best wishes and prayers, I am,

Sincerely in Christ,

+George J. Lucas

Most Reverend George J. Lucas
Archbishop of Omaha

Joseph C. Taphorn

Reverend Joseph C. Taphorn
Chancellor

ARCHDIOCESE of OMAHA

Safe Environment Office

Dear Parent,

The Archdiocese of Omaha, out of concern for all God's people and in response to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, has developed a program for the safe environment education of children and young people supported and mandated by Archbishop Lucas.

> *Diocese/eparchies will establish 'safe environment' programs. They will cooperate with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children. Dioceses/eparchies will make clear to clergy and members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to sexual abuse.*
>
> *Article 12 – Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*

This program is called ***Circle of Grace***. It is meant to supplement and be integrated into the excellent programs and curricula for the formation of children and young people within the Archdiocese of Omaha. ***Circle of Grace*** aims to equip our children and young people by arming them with essential knowledge and skills grounded in the richness of our faith. This program helps children and young people to understand their own (and other's) dignity in mind, body, and spirit.

What is a Circle of Grace?

The Catholic Church teaches that God has created each of us as unique and special. Genesis 1:27 tells us that we are created "male and female in God's image" and that God saw this as "very good." In that goodness, we are meant to respect ourselves and everyone else as persons created and loved by God.

Adults assist children and young people to recognize God's love by helping them to understand that each of us lives and moves in a circle of grace. You can imagine your own circle of grace by putting your arms above your head then circle down in front of your body including side to side. This circle, front to back, holds who you are in your body and through your senses. It holds your very essence in mind, heart, soul, and sexuality.

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Tel: 402-558-3100 • Fax: 402-554-0783 • www.archomaha.com

Why is it important to help our children understand the Circle of Grace?

God intends our relationships in life to be experiences of divine love. Respectful, nurturing, loving relationships increase our understanding of our own value and help us to love others. It is never too early to help children and young people understand how very special they are and how relationships in life are called to be sacred. Understanding this can help them to protect the special person they are and to be respectful of others.

Adults, especially parents, as they strive to provide a safe and protective environment, hold the responsibility to help children and young people understand and respect their own dignity and that of others. A truly safe and protective environment is one where children and young people recognize when they are safe or unsafe and know how to bring their concerns, fears, and uncertainties to the trusted adults in their lives.

How is the Circle of Grace Program different from other protection programs?

According to research, one in four girls and one in seven boys will be sexually abused by age eighteen.[1] Many protection programs focus on "stranger danger"; however, up to ninety percent (90%) of the time the perpetrator of abuse is known to the child or young person such as a relative or family friend. ***Circle of Grace*** goes beyond just protection by helping children and young people understand the sacredness of who they are and how to seek help through their relationships with trusted adults.

Please feel free to contact your school or parish office if you have questions or want more information.

[1] www.usccb.org or http://nccanch.acfhhs.gov

COMMON QUESTIONS OF PARENTS

1) How is this connected to the "Safe Environment" program?
The Circle of Grace is the safe environment program for children/youth. It was created by the Archdiocese of Omaha GRACES sub-committees. Its goal is to help children/youth understand the sacredness of who they are and how to seek help when needed through their relationship with trusted adults.

2) What information can this program give my child that they are not getting already?
The Circle of Grace Program reinforces, in a peer setting, that their faith community cares about their safety and wants them to understand how to seek help if they feel unsafe for any reason. It will help them identify potentially unsafe situations and know how to handle them by seeking help from trusted adults.

3) You indicate that this program will provide them with "life skills", what do you mean by this?
It reinforces that they are valued by God and others. It gives them information on boundaries and practical directives of what to do if someone makes them feel uncomfortable when in their Circle of Grace. It is a good foundation for healthy relationships that will help them through out their lives.

4) Will this program be age appropriate?
Yes! The lessons were written for the grades with great attention to stages of child development.

5) How can parents support what is being taught in the program?
Parents will receive parent letters as well as take home activities for several of the lessons to do with their children. Talking with your children about the Circle of Grace at home will help your children to understand the importance of the lessons and that the lessons apply everywhere, not just at school. Regional parent meetings will be offered to help parents better understand the program. Check with your DRE for information about scheduled meetings.
Additionally, you are your child's most important teacher in the area of relationships. Much of what your child will learn and later imitate about relationships comes from what they learn by your example. Creating an atmosphere where they know that they can talk to you about anything provides a valuable safety net for your child because they know they have you to turn to whenever they have a concern
.

6) Is there accountability attached to this program implementation?
Yes! There will be an ongoing evaluation of the program to ensure its effectiveness and to incorporate any suggestions that would improve the quality of the program.

7) Will there be resources (people & material) available if I have questions?
Yes! Parishes and Schools have parent information and resources available

8) Shouldn't parents be the ones teaching their children about sexuality?
Absolutely! This is NOT a sex education program. Circle of Grace will provide children with a sound understanding of their own value and of God's care and presence in their lives. It will also help them notice the signals that tell them when they do not feel safe and how to talk to a trusted adult. All of this will be a good foundation for healthy relationships. However, this is not a sexuality education program. Many parents will appreciate that this program will provide a spiritual framework that will allow parent-child communication about the value of all that they are, including their sexuality. Those conversations are most effective between parent and child.

9) Is this a mandatory program for my child?
The United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) developed the Charter for Protection of Children and Young People. Article 12 of this document states that each Diocese will have a safe environment program for adults and children/youth. If you have questions or concerns about your child participating in the Circle of Grace Program, please contact your DRE, Principal, etc.

Parenting and Sexuality
"The Basics"

Be attentive and respectful.

Your child is a precious child of God. Especially in the area of sexuality, you want your children to appreciate that they are made in the image and likeness of God and that sexuality is a gift. Your respect for them as you hold them, bathe them, care for them will teach them better than words that their bodies are to be respected. They will learn of their value in your care. When they are told about their **Circle of Grace** in religious education and/or school, it helps for them to believe that God is with them and for them because they have already experienced your love and your care. They will grow up knowing that they are meant to respect others and are to expect respect from others.

Teaching children about their bodies must happen in an age appropriate way. For young children, the best guideline is to answer their questions as they arise. Try to always connect sexuality and spirituality in simple, short ways. Include God in the answer to help them recognize that sexuality is something special and created by God. For older children, it may be necessary to initiate discussions. More about that below.

Know what you really believe and why.

It is vital that you think about what you really believe about the place of sexuality in human life and why. Your own sexual history will considerably influence how you feel about sexual expression. If you were sexually active outside of marriage, you may find it difficult to tell your child to wait until marriage. If you waited until marriage, you may fear that your child will find you woefully outdated. Or you may find you are much more able to explain the benefits of waiting until marriage by talking about how that strengthened your own marriage.

Anticipate how you will respond if your child asks what you did. Whether or not you answer the question directly depends on you. Some parents who were sexually active before marriage decide at some point, usually when the child is older, to tell the truth. However, if you fear that telling them will not be helpful to them or your relationship with them, it is not necessary to reveal your own history. It is important that you consider how your answer will impact future communication with your child. Be as honest as you can, not only about your actions but about your feelings, then and now, as well as about the consequences in your own life and relationships. Children are naturally curious about Mom and Dad and how they handled things.

Carefully consider how you will explain to your child why sex belongs in marriage. It is not enough to just say that it does. In advance, make a list of reasons why you believe sex belongs in marriage. Helping your children understand ***why*** will help them to make this value their own. Think about how you will react to questions about not only where babies come from but questions about oral sex, masturbation, the aunt who is not married with a baby, and many other issues that will arise. These questions are not just possibilities—they are questions every child should talk about at some time with their parent(s). If you ignore their initial questions, you may not get another chance. They will sense your discomfort and go other places with their questions.

Talk often but not necessarily long.

When something related to sexuality comes up in a conversation, respond appropriately but do not take every opportunity to preach or lecture. If you do, your child will soon "tune" you out. Frequent matter of fact responses that state your values with a sensitivity to what they are concerned about will be best.

Know their world.

Pay attention to the environment your children live in. Watch television with them. If they have access to the Internet, take an interest in what they enjoy. Given the many sexualized messages in media, you will find many opportunities to engage your children in conversation. Listen to their music with them and talk with them about what they enjoy. When you are in the car, allow them to tune the radio and just listen. Ask them to explain songs to you, objectionable ones or wonderful ones. Something about talking to Mom or Dad about the music often teaches young people a great deal. It gives them a chance to talk about what they believe and it gives you a chance to hear it. Resist the impulse to launch into a lecture. Ask open-ended questions like:

What do you like about this song/movie/video?
Tell me the story of the song.
What do you think of the message of the song/movie/video?
How do you think that song makes women/men feel?

Take time when they want to talk

Children often ask questions or make comments at very inopportune times. If you are in a public place, tell your child you will talk later when you are alone---and do so at the earliest opportunity. If you are not in a public place, make it a priority to respond as soon as possible, preferably when they ask, because that is when they are most interested in your answer. If you feel you don't know how to answer, explain what you know and assure them you will think more about it and talk more later. And do it! If you fail to come back and fully respond, they will think you are uncomfortable and will be less likely to ask you again.

Take time to celebrate transitions with special times spent together. Growing up with the accompanying body changes is usually a time of uncertainty and confusion for children. Having a celebration says "this is a good and wonderful thing." Be honest about your own struggles, fears, and discomforts when you were going through the same transitions. Children usually like to know what it was like for you to go through the same things.

Use correct terminology even when it makes you a little uncomfortable.

Sometimes, your parents may not used correct terminology and therefore using it is uncomfortable for you. Break the cycle by using the appropriate language that is correct and respectful of the body as created by God. Remember that God created all the amazing parts of your beautiful child and they are simply learning about God's creation. This teaches them to respectfully name their body and gives you and opportunity to teach them about respecting their **Circle of Grace**. Be sure you explain any terms that are unclear. If you show discomfort, you are sending them a negative message about their bodies that will not lead them to respect and reverence themselves and others.

What is the real question?

Sometimes children ask a question to "test the water". But there is a bigger question they really want to know about that they either are hesitant to ask or cannot figure out how to say. Gently listening and drawing them into a conversation is important. Respond to what they ask, always watching for clues that they need more information or reassurance. They need to know that it is OK to ask you anything. You should be their 'expert' even if you don't feel like one. Otherwise, they will look for their answers some place else.

Talk about risk behaviors.

Don't wait too long to discuss risk behaviors like sexually transmitted diseases, broken hearts, pregnancy, and the myriad consequences that result from early sexual activity. Many parents are unaware how very early children are learning about sexuality from their peers and the media. But much of their information is inaccurate and certainly not value-based. Talking with your child about these things will not make them more likely to be sexually active. In fact, studies show that children whose parents talk openly with them and communicate their values are less likely to be sexually active.

Tell stories

Recounting stories is a good way to communicate. Use the stories of friends, acquaintances, a story from the news, even your own, if you are comfortable doing so. You can change the details and names if you are concerned about them knowing who it is. A good story communicates in very effective ways. And we all remember stories. Resist too much explanation after you have talked about the values you are trying to communicate. In your own life, you have been touched often by others who have suffered by their sexual choices. Helping your children to understand that sex outside of marriage results in painful consequences is important.

Talk about humans.

When you talk about human sexuality, talk about human beings. As obvious as this may seem, countless stories exist about parents who tried to explain the "birds and the bees" by talking about birds and bees. Children need to learn about their bodies and those of the opposite sex by talking with you about human bodies. When correct language is used, you are honoring yourselves and your bodies as created by God. Of course, all such conversations must happen in the context of the child's age and level of understanding. However, consider that children often have access to information about sexuality long before you did at their same age.

Set reasonable limits

Children and teens need appropriate limits and boundaries. These help them to know they are cared for. It is appropriate to know where your child is and to expect that they communicate with you if plans change. They should be faithful to the time they agreed to return and open and honest about their activities.

Discuss together why you are establishing the limit, rule, etc. Always make their safety and well-being the true priority and communicate that to them. Help them to see that limits will help them remember who they are and that they are loved.

Don't interrogate.

As children grow, the respect between parent and child must also grow. Balancing appropriate boundaries and trust in not simple. However, if a child feels they are not trusted, they will not be trustworthy. Asking detailed questions of an adolescent after every outing says, "I'm not sure I trust you so I have to check up on you." That is not to say that an interested inquiry like "was the movie good?" is inappropriate. Children should know that their parents care about them and their activities. But interrogation on a regular basis does not lead to an increase in the trust in the relationship. Tell your children that the trust between you is very special and that you hope they appreciate that too.

If your child violates your trust, do not hesitate to let them know that you are very disappointed and that it will take some time to rebuild that trust. Additional boundaries (a more restrictive curfew, greater supervision, or other rules) may be appropriate until you are again confident that they can be trusted. This

is all part of helping children understand that trust in relationships is fragile and important. It will help to prepare them to value trust in adulthood.

Connect sexuality and spirituality

Grow in your own understanding of the relationship between sexuality and spirituality. Help your children to understand sexuality is a basic component of personality in and through which each of us relates to God, self, and others. It is a wonderful gift of God which enables each of us, through our bodies, to lovingly and respectfully care for one another. As your children grow in appreciation of and respect for their bodies and the bodies of others, help them to understand why sexual activity belongs in marriage. Help them to see that waiting until marriage will lead to self-respect, commitment, and intimacy—not to mention a better sexual relationship in marriage.

Respect their privacy

Respect your child's desire for some privacy, especially as they get older. That does not mean that you never go in their room, put their clothes away, or look in a drawer for a something. What is means is you do not intentionally "snoop" around. You do not routinely rummage through drawers, closets, etc. You demonstrate trust, treating them as you would have liked to be treated at their age.

Tell the truth.

Always tell the truth. Don't exaggerate to frighten them into or away from certain behaviors. If you are unsure how much to say, particularly to a very young child, respond to only the question they have asked. If they want more information and you have taken time to honestly respond, they will continue to ask about what they really want to know. On the other hand, by keeping your first response simple, you may have satisfied their curiosity for now and they may later—days, months, or years—return for more information.

Do not hesitate to honestly explain the consequences of sex outside of marriage. While very young children may not need detailed information, certainly by junior high, young people need to hear from their parents about the negative consequences of pre-marital sexual activity. Do not expect that they are receiving accurate information elsewhere about sexually transmitted disease, emotional harm, and pregnancy. Educate yourself and them. Their future happiness and choices depend on it.

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.

Children are the living letters we send into a time we will never see…

Neal Postman

Touch that makes a child feel uncomfortable needs to be disclosed to a trusted adult. When someone touches a child in private areas, shows them sexual pictures, uses sexual language or asks a child to touch them in private areas of their body – it is a violation against the child. Suspected child abuse always needs to be reported to the authorities.
Child Protective Services Hotline # is 1-800-652-1999

Developmental Dimensions and Stages

We have learned over the past several decades about how we develop. Human beings are complex, multi-dimensional creatures. Each person has his or her own unique journey toward God. There are six dimensions of development that are identifiable and seem to be reflected in some way in all of us.

- Physical: Who we are as gendered persons.
- Cognitive: Our beliefs, knowledge, and perceptions.
- Emotional: Our feelings and how those feeling affect our relationships.
- Social: How we relate to others and our capacity to share ourselves.
- Moral: What we value and how we make decisions based on our beliefs.
- Spiritual: Recognizing and acknowledging the presence of God in our relationships.

Psychosexual development is our personal journey toward integration as embodied human persons. It is a process of growth that embraces all aspects of our human reality. There are five stages used to describe our journey:

- Infancy: Children learn about their world primarily through touch.
- Toddler: Children are totally delighted in their bodies and begin to recognize gender differences.
- Pre-school to Puberty: Children develop gender identity and a sense of privacy.
- Adolescence: Adolescents explore who they are in and through relationships as their bodies mature toward adulthood.
- Adulthood: Adults integrate self-knowledge, empathy, sensitivity, trust equality, spontaneity, and appropriate self-disclosure into their lives.

"Being in the image of God, the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone."

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Second Edition, 1997

Tips for Parents

Even 'nice' people sometimes do mean things

Abusers are experts at looking friendly, nice, safe, kind, generous and loving
A child is vulnerable when the other person has more:
age (older), size (bigger), knowledge, resources, status and/or power.
REMEMBER: Up to 30% of abusers/offenders are under the age of 18.
Abusers use manipulative behaviors to gain control:
flattery, bribery, jealousy, intimidation, anger.
Abusers manipulate parents along with children.

Pay close attention to who is around your children

Parents should know where their children are and who they are with.
Children should know how to contact their parents.
Use the buddy system: Take a buddy or don't go.
Refuse to leave your children with someone you don't trust.
No job or event is worth your child's safety.

Listen to what your children say

Encourage communication by taking seriously what your children say.
Increase your child's vocabulary by helping them name feelings.
Back up your child's right to say 'NO'.
Role Play: A child who never says 'no' to a parent
will never say 'no' to another adult.
Give children permission to yell for help.

Take a second look at potential danger

Be cautious on the Internet, experts recommend computer use be monitored regularly.
Be selective when sharing personal information: including last name,
telephone numbers, contact information, schools,
activity schedules and occasions when someone is home alone.
Talk about worse case scenarios and possible solutions to uncomfortable situations.
Don't follow anyone who takes your bicycle, book bag or purse – report theft instead.
Watch out for children who are alone often.

Trust your instincts

Listen to your gut feelings, if you have doubts listen to them.
Your body sometimes knows what your head hasn't yet figured out.

Recognize change in your child's behavior

Change in behavior is a signal of change in your child's life.
Tell your children: I will always love you.

Model healthy boundaries and limit setting behavior

Be a good example.

Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect: Signs and Symptoms

Author(s): Child Welfare Information Gateway

Year Published: 2006

The first step in helping abused or neglected children is learning to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single sign does not prove child abuse is occurring in a family; however, when these signs appear repeatedly or in combination you should take a closer look at the situation and consider the possibility of child abuse.

If you do suspect a child is being harmed, reporting your suspicions may protect the child and get help for the family. Contact your local child protective services agency or police department. **For more information about where and how to file a report, call the Childhelp USA® National Child Abuse Hotline (1.800.4.A.CHILD).**

Recognizing Child Abuse

The following signs may signal the presence of child abuse or neglect.

The Child:

- Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance.
- Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents' attention.
- Has learning problems (or difficulty concentrating) that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes.
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen.
- Lacks adult supervision.
- Is overly compliant, passive, or withdrawn.
- Comes to school or other activities early, stays late, and does not want to go home.

The Parent:

- Shows little concern for the child.
- Denies the existence of—or blames the child for—the child's problems in school or at home.
- Asks teachers or other caretakers to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves.
- Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome.
- Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve.
- Looks primarily to the child for care, attention, and satisfaction of emotional needs.

The Parent and Child:

- Rarely touch or look at each other.
- Consider their relationship entirely negative.
- State that they do not like each other.

Types of Abuse

The following are some signs often associated with particular types of child abuse and neglect: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. It is important to note, however, these types of abuse are more typically found in combination than alone. A physically abused child, for example, is often emotionally abused as well, and a sexually abused child also may be neglected.

Signs of Physical Abuse

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the **child**:

- Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes.
- Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school.
- Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home.
- Shrinks at the approach of adults.
- Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver.

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:

- Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injury.
- Describes the child as "evil," or in some other very negative way.
- Uses harsh physical discipline with the child.
- Has a history of abuse as a child.

Signs of Neglect

Consider the possibility of neglect when the **child**:

- Is frequently absent from school.
- Begs or steals food or money.
- Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses.
- Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor.
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather.
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs.
- States that there is no one at home to provide care.

Consider the possibility of neglect when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:

- Appears to be indifferent to the child.
- Seems apathetic or depressed.
- Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner.
- Is abusing alcohol or other drugs.

Signs of Sexual Abuse

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the **child**:

- Has difficulty walking or sitting.
- Suddenly refuses to change for gym or to participate in physical activities.
- Reports nightmares or bed wetting.
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite.
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior.
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease, particularly if under age 14.
- Runs away.
- Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver.

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:

- Is unduly protective of the child or severely limits the child's contact with other children, especially of the opposite sex.
- Is secretive and isolated.
- Is jealous or controlling with family members.

Signs of Emotional Maltreatment

Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the **child**:

- Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression.
- Is either inappropriately adult (parenting other children, for example) or inappropriately infantile (frequently rocking or head-banging, for example).
- Is delayed in physical or emotional development.
- Has attempted suicide.
- Reports a lack of attachment to the parent.

Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:

- Constantly blames, belittles, or berates the child.
- Is unconcerned about the child and refuses to consider offers of help for the child's problems.
- Overtly rejects the child.

Resources

Identifying Child Abuse and Neglect
www.childwelfare.gov/can/identifying
Resources and information from the Child Welfare Information Gateway website about signs and symptoms of child maltreatment, including training resources.

Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect
www.childwelfare.gov/preventing
Resources and information from the Child Welfare Information Gateway website.

This factsheet was adapted, with permission, from *Recognizing Child Abuse: What Parents Should Know*. Prevent Child Abuse America © 2003.

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http://www.childwelfare.gov/can/index.cfm
Updated on June 21, 2006

Important facts

Young Adults

- 87% of young men and 31% of young women think pornography is acceptable; studies show pornography results in aberrant sexual attitudes and behaviors, substance abuse, and non-marital cohabitation values ("Generation XXX, Pornography Acceptance and Use Among Emerging Adults," *Journal of Adolescent Research*, Vol. 23, No.1, 2008).

Families

- 47% of Christian families said pornography is a family problem (Focus on the Family, October 1, 2003); the Internet was a factor in 2 of 3 divorces (American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers 2003, divorce-wizards.com).

Children

- Approximately 20% of Internet pornography involves children; 1 in 5 children (10-17 years old) receives unwanted sexual solicitations online (Youth Internet Safety Survey, U.S. Department of Justice, 2001).
- 76% of victims in Internet-initiated sexual exploitation cases were ages 13-15, 75% were girls ("*Most cases progressed to sexual encounters*"); 93% of face-to-face meetings involved illegal sex (*Journal of Adolescent Health*, November 2004).
- 9 of 10 children between 8-16 have viewed pornography on the Internet, in most cases unintentionally (London School of Economics, January 2002); the average age of first Internet exposure to pornography is 11 years old (Internet-filter-review.com).
- The largest consumer of Internet pornography is 12 - 17 year-olds (Various sources, 2007).

You know you have a problem with pornography if . . .

- you quickly change websites when someone comes in the room;
- you are preoccupied with being alone on the computer;
- a printout of your browsing history would be embarrassing;
- you've spent money on pornography;
- your relationships are suffering at work or home because of your Internet porn use.

As little as six hours of exposure to soft-core porn is enough to . . .

- destroy satisfaction with one's spouse;
- decrease the value of faithfulness;
- lose ability to be with one person and cherish him or her.

ARCHDIOCESE of OMAHA
Anti-Pornography Task Force

As for me and My House
we will serve the Lord.
Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas

Developed by the Archdiocese of Omaha Anti-Pornography Task Force in collaboration with My House Anti-Pornography Initiative, Archdiocese of Kansas City-Kansas
January 2010

7 Steps to Protect your Family from Pornography

ARCHDIOCESE of OMAHA
Anti-Pornography Task Force

1. **Secure all Internet devices with filtering and accountability software,** keep them in a high-traffic area of the house, and limit the time children can use them.

Computers — Use accountability and filtering software such as **www.covenanteyes.com** and **www.safeeyes.com**.

Cell phones — *Sex & Cell Phones* has parental control information at **www.nationalcoalition.org**; iPhone/iPod Touch filtering devices are available at **www.safeeyes.com**; Windows Mobile 6 cell phone and PDA accountability services are available at **www.covenanteyes.com**.

Video Games — **www.iphantom.com** and **www.opendns.com** help filter a home's wireless signal and protect children on X-Box, PlayStation, Wii, and other game systems.

2. **Monitor all social networking sites** for children and teens (Facebook, MySpace, xanga.com, etc).

3. **Know the user names and passwords** to email accounts, social networking sites, and any site that requires a user name and password for your children and teens. Don't forget to periodically check email, social networking sites, text and/or picture messages on cell phones.

4. **Secure television and satellite radio,** and **screen all movies** before watching them.

Christian movie review sites such as **www.usccb.org/movies** and **www.pluggedinonline.com** provide a detailed review of movies, including a written description of sexual content, violent content, or other morally offensive content.

Satellite radio — "Family-friendly" packages are available without "mature content."

Block "adult/mature" content on TV, as well as channels with morally offensive content. See **www.skyangel.com** for family-friendly TV packages.

Use teachable moments while watching a "family" show that depicts a situation contrary to your family values.

5. **Spend quality time** with your children and teens by:

- eating family dinners together;
- affirming your children and teens daily;
- praying with your children and teens daily;
- turning off the TV, computer, cell phone, and talk to your children;
- having vacation/family gatherings together, and building positive memories.

6. **Have open, honest, regular, conversations about God's glorious plan for creating us male and female and the beauty of our human dignity and sexuality.**

Become familiar with the following *Theology of the Body* resources:

- **www.LoveIsFaithful.com**
- **www.purelove.com**
- **www.christopherwest.com**

7. **Encourage family members to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation** monthly, and go to Mass as a family each Sunday. Eucharistic adoration and weekday Mass are tremendous blessings.

For more information, visit:

http://www.archomaha.org/pastoral/se/taskforce.html

Or contact:

Mary Beth Hanus
Chair, Anti-Pornography Task Force
P.O. Box 4130
Omaha, NE 68104
402.827.3798
mbhanus@archomaha.org

The aforementioned websites can be helpful, but they have not been formally endorsed by the Archdiocese of Omaha Anti-Pornography Task Force or the Archdiocese of Kansas City-Kansas 'My House' Office.

Circle of Grace

Resources for Instructors and Parents

Websites

National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse & Neglect 800-FYI-3366 www.childwelfare.gov/can/index/cfm

United States Catholic Conference, Office of Child and Youth Protection www.usccb.org/ocyp/index.shtml

Parents United www.lfsneb.org/parentsunited

ProtectKids.com: Protecting Children in Cyberspace www.ProtectKids.com

National Coalition for the Protection of Childrena and Families www.nationalcoalition.org

Archdiocese of Omaha www.archomaha.org
The Safe Environment tab has infromation on Circle of Grace and the Anti-Pornograpny Task Force

Books

The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan, John Paul II, Pauline Books and Media, 1997

Theology of the Body Explained, Christopher West, 2007

The Holy Longing, Ronald Rolheiser, Doubleday, 1999

Unmasking Sexual Con Games, 3rd Edition, Kathleen M. McGee and Laura J. Buddenberg, Boys Town Press, 2003

Church Documents

Educational Guidance in Human Love: Outlines for Sex Education Rome 1983

Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning, United States Catholic Conference, 1990

The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family, Pontifical Council for the Family, 1996

Promise to Protect – Pledge to Heal: Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003

Consultation

Archdiocese of Omaha

- Mary Beth Hanus, LMHP, Victim Outreach and Prevention Manager, Archdiocese of Omaha
  1-888-808-9055 mbhanus@archomaha.org

Other

- Girls & Boys Town Hotline 800-448-3000
- Nebraska Child Protective Services 800-652-1999