

Diocese of Orange



Pastoral Guidelines for Digital Evangelization

August 2020 v1.0
(Formerly known as Technology Guidelines)

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About this Document

This document has been through various iterations, in what originally was a “technology procedural recommendations document.” It was created and still intends to provide guidance and offer practical recommendations to pastoral ministers on the use of technology in their parishes, ministries and groups. In its evolution, it has become a more comprehensive tool for ministers in our Diocese deciding to embrace our call to evangelize all nations (on all technological, digital, online and virtual platforms).

Use of this Document

This document is intended as guidance for prudent and pastoral use of digital platforms and strategies in evangelization and faith formation of minor children and teens. Parish leaders and volunteers utilizing digital platforms for each age group will apply these guidelines appropriately to the particular ministry context.

These “guidelines” are not meant to be exhaustive but rather recommendations and considerations that can serve as boundaries for the use of the ever-changing technology in your particular ministry context. Therefore the continued evolution of these guidelines is offered every year in order to respond to a changing landscape and emerging digital platforms/practices. The guidelines can be utilized as recommendations in order to facilitate evangelization in this new digital, virtual and online landscape. As of the writing this document, we are in the midst of a global pandemic; doing online gatherings has become our new way of doing ministry and these guidelines, which have existed for the past 8 years, seem more relevant than ever before.

While this document speaks of the most ‘popular’ forms of technology that exist to date, there is an awareness and understanding of the ever-changing world of technology. Therefore, we encourage you to refer to this document for some guidance and recommendations and realize some guidelines may need to be adapted and when in doubt the need for continual dialogue in this matter is imperative.

Finally, it is important to note the expectation of all ministers in the church to understand and employ the “prudent principle,” a principle which should always guide a pastoral minister. A pastoral minister should be aware of doing everything that is “prudently” possible to avoid problems, miscommunication and misunderstandings. Common sense should be the guide in all circumstances and is expected to be used by any and all adults serving our communities and parishes in the Diocese of Orange, most especially those working around minors and teenagers. It is worth mentioning and reminding all adults working with minors in the Diocese of Orange must be fingerprinted and Safe Environment trained.

SECTION ONE – INTRODUCTION

The enclosed guidelines and recommendations are designed to aid pastoral ministers and parish personnel in determining appropriate boundaries in their use of software and hardware applications, digital and virtual platforms, whether they may be online tools or technological means of communication or engagement. *For what purpose?* To be Christ to the world! Jesus Christ taught us the way and no matter the tools we use, at the end of the day they are only tools – He is what matters; we emulate and take our cues from Jesus. A Savior who walked amongst us; a Shepherd who listened, who spoke and who told stories, who spoke in parables and shared meals. He touched lives and was touched by people’s actions and behaviors. He healed others with forgiveness, a touch, and/or a vocal command.

This is our call as disciples, to evangelize and share that Jesus Christ is the fullest experience of God being in relationship with us. We who desire to communicate God’s love for others and the invitation to be disciples of Jesus must recognize the value of getting His message out into the world by all means necessary. And in today’s worlds our means are technological, are digital, are online and are virtual. May we utilize this document to bring Christ’s message and Christ’s love into the world. Go Make Disciples of all Nations!

Before embarking on the practical, it is worth noting that those who minister and work in pastoral settings have long understood that our efforts are to be relational and thus communicative if they are to be effective:

“Effective ministry with adolescents (has always been) built on relationships. The central place of the Emmaus story in A Vision of Youth Ministry demonstrated the primacy of relationships and of discovering God within those relationships”
(Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry)

Our church has always been at the forefront of reminding us to use technological tools at our disposal to be used in positive and dynamic ways in our many pastoral settings.

“Using the media correctly and competently can lead to a genuine inculturation of the Gospel.”
(The Church in America [Ecclesia in America], no. 72)

Our goal is to empower pastoral ministers in these continually changing times, to embrace new worlds and claim them for Christ. May this document provide clarity, guidance and some best practices so that hearts may be transformed for Christ.

SECTION TWO – BASIC TERMS

Since the ministry environment is ever changing, it is helpful to provide a definition of key terms that will be utilized throughout the document.

- **Pastoral Ministers:** any person in ministry
- **Young Adults:** Any person between the age of 18-39
- **Minors:** Any person under the age of 18
- **Vulnerable Adult:** A dependent adult
- **Mandated reporter:** Anyone in the capacity of supervisory or disciplinary role over minors or vulnerable adults
- **Ethical/Permissive Reporter:** Anyone who works in a pastoral setting with minors and/or vulnerable adults
- **Parent/Guardian Permission Form:** parent/guardian authorization form for minors (needed from every parent for every minor in pastoral settings)
- **Participant Release Form:** participant authorization (needed for every adult working in a pastoral setting with minors and/or vulnerable adults.)
- **Code of Conduct Form for Teens:** a “recommended form” which can be used along with the Parent Permission Form; allowing minors to also be cognizant of what is expected of their participation.
- **Code of Conduct Form for Participants:** a “recommended form” which can be used along with the Participant Form allows for participants to understand basic expectations.
- **Consent Forms** – all meetings must have parents’ written consent prior to connecting with minor(s).
- **Certified Adults** – All meetings with minors must always be conducted by Safe Environment certified adults and a parent/guardian should have access to the meeting.

SECTION THREE – BASIC PRINCIPLES

Advances in the online, digital and virtual landscapes at all levels have increased the opportunities for the Church to communicate her message. It used to be said that digital forms of communications like social media were reserved for those who work with adolescents, yet the Internet, Social Media, Gaming platforms and all other forms of software and hardware should be considered tools for communication, collaboration and information. Some platforms have age guidelines for use (ex. Children under the age of 13 are not “allowed” to use Facebook. We know that they do – but our strategies should not utilize Facebook for children under 13. Age restrictions on social media platforms should be observed.) One must remember that these channels are simply that, tools, which should not become an expedient and convenient means to evade the complicated and messy work of building human relationships. This, by no means should replace the tried and true experience and opportunity to connect with individuals. Digital engagement can at times fall short in truly enhancing the connectedness of human-to-human, face-to-face social interaction.

True community and relationship building within faith-based relationships follows the example of Jesus Christ - walking, talking, sharing meals, and praying face-to-face with others (see Luke 24: 13-35). Those who work on behalf of the Church should demand a more authentic relationship with those whom they serve; our posture should always be relational. Yet, it is worth mentioning that in this new world, relational ministry can occur through online, digital and virtual means. It may take some creativity, some extra time or some authentic witness and facilitation skills.

On the other hand, please be aware that there are people who *may* initiate online discussions that they are too embarrassed or timid to initiate in person. They may bare their souls on the Internet because there’s no perceived consequence to what they say, or there is assumed anonymity.

- It is entirely possible to form inauthentic relationships on-line - almost like acting, taking on a persona, playing a role or playing in form of an avatar.
- It is difficult to judge peoples’ emotional or spiritual states only on the basis of what they say online. The one emotive blog entry or the You-Tube video or social media post may or may not accurately reflect the entirety of what a person is going through.

Boundaries -Those who minister and work in pastoral settings should be ever vigilant regarding healthy boundaries with anyone, but especially minors and vulnerable adults.

Minors and vulnerable adults are not the peers of an adult serving within a ministry capacity. It is inappropriate for pastoral ministers to include them within their own social circle, online or otherwise. Ministers should not be accessible to minors and vulnerable adults they serve on a constant on-call or regular social basis.

As leaders in the community, our goal is to use these digital tools responsibly and ethically, so understanding each tool thoroughly and discerning its value and oversight is the responsibility of each parish leader in concert with their Pastor

Primacy of Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians are the primary educators in faith and the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children. Those who minister in pastoral settings must recognize the importance of the role of parents and guardians when dealing with all digital forms of communication with minors and vulnerable adults. As always, we seek a partnership with parents/guardians in the faith formation of their children.

We should be aware that many young people may be utilizing digital platforms, socially or otherwise, with or without the permission of their parents/guardian. It is essential that we work in partnership with parents/guardians to respect their authority while providing them with information regarding safe use of these digital platforms for their children.

Discretion

Those who minister and work in pastoral settings must take great care to be consistent in representing the worth of their character in person and on-line. Clear communication and respect for boundaries is needed at any and all level of contact with anyone, especially minors and vulnerable adults.

E-mails, text messages, social media, blog postings, Instagram/snapchat videos or comments, YouTube videos and the like are all public forums from which a permanent record can be obtained. As a representative of the Church, those who minister and serve the faithful, (especially minors and vulnerable adults) should be diligent in avoiding situations, which might be the source of scandal for themselves, the parish or others. Furthermore, those we minister to must also be informed and constantly reminded on the public nature of such communication.

Ownership

Any digital tool that is used as part of the ministry in the whole of the Diocese of Orange (such as, but not limited to websites, social media platforms, blogs, video sites, apps etc.) are the property of the Diocese of Orange and all its parishes and therefore has the right to review and or claim rights to any and all postings, including but not limited to the whole page, channel, group etc. Additionally, they have the right to request access when determining if there was an inappropriate interaction.

SECTION FOUR - MINISTRY WEB PAGES

Anyone who establishes a ministry web presence should make a commitment to this vehicle of communication. Web pages, especially the index or main page(s), should be regularly updated. As with any ministry effort, there should be an intentional plan and set of goals regarding establishing and maintaining a web presence. This should be clearly communicated to the pastoral staff, volunteers, and those we minister to including but not limited to their parents and/or guardians. Now free websites are easily obtained through sites such as Weebly, Wix, etc.

Great care should be used to protect people on a web page that is publicly accessible:

- Peoples' personal phone numbers or e-mail addresses should not be available.
- Written permission is required from parents/guardian before posting photos or videos of minors or vulnerable adults.
- When posting pictures or videos, use only the minor or vulnerable adults' first name and only with parent/guardian prior written authorization.
- At no point should a picture or video be used that might be considered embarrassing or unflattering.
- We should always be mindful to protect the reputations of our church membership. If any individuals are uncomfortable with a particular photo or video, it should be immediately removed from the website.
- Regarding appropriate boundaries for ministers and/or volunteer, great care should also be taken to protect contact information (home address or phone, cell number, e-mail address, etc.) of adults and youth.

Best Practice

In order to have access to pictures and/or content, consider using approved text that can explain and give permission, release and authorization. This will provide appropriate consent to photographs or video being taken during any/all parish, diocesan events. (See Next Page for example and for minor and adult authorization, release and permission forms)

Examples of language and vocabulary that can be utilized

Below are some examples recommended when trying to give reasons, asking for consent or releasing of liability. Some of this language can be found on minor permission slips.

Reason for Photograph and Video Consent Vocabulary

From time to time, we take pictures and video of parish ministry events and gatherings online and in person. We would like to be able to use these photographs and videos for future flyers, newsletters, emails, parish and diocesan publications and various other parish/diocesan ministry marketing materials or web pages. To do this, we will need both the students' and the parents' consent (if they are minors), and adults' consent when working with adult participants or volunteers. We will not use last names of any individual whose photos or videos are posted. If there are concerns about pictures or videos posted or utilized on any media, please contact the parish ministry coordinator or webmaster, and they will promptly be removed.

PHOTO/VIDEO RELEASE LIABILITY LANGAUGE

I/We, that parent(s) of this youth (name) _____, authorize and give full consent, without limitation or reservation, to (parish name) _____, to publish any photographs or videos in which the above named student and/or pictures or videos of his/her family members appears while participating in any program with (parish name)_____ ministry. There will be no compensation for use of any photographs at the time of publication or in the future.

SECTION FIVE - EMAIL, ONLINE MESSAGING, AND VIDEO CHATTING

Email and online messaging allows for increased flexibility and immediacy in ministry communication. When appropriately combined with face-to-face communication, email and messaging can significantly enhance how we minister to others. The same boundary issues that must be respected in oral communication must be respected in written ones.

Good judgment should always be used with text-based communication tools. Parental consent and/or awareness needs to be shared when communicating by email or messaging with minors and vulnerable adults.

- It is recommended to maintain a separate e-mail account for your professional communication and only use this account when communicating with youth or vulnerable adults.
- Email, Online Messaging (on apps or social media) and Video Chatting communication should only be used for ministry matters and information that deals strictly with one's professional or ministerial relationship. Communicate only about matters that address aspect of the ministry.
- Great care should be taken to maintain professionalism and appropriate boundaries in all communication. (if using video chat, your professionalism in dress code, background are even more important)
- Great care should also be taken so that personal one on one exchanges are kept at a minimum or are avoided all together.

Written or Video communication can be misinterpreted.

- Before sending an e-mail or online message (video/text) ask yourself if someone reading it might "read something into it" that you didn't intend. (also include any relevant leadership or other volunteers)
- Communicate in person whenever possible. If you think your communication might somehow be misunderstood, don't send it or ask someone to review.
- If there is any potential for embarrassment or harm, to the person or someone in ministry please do not send the message.
- Be cautious when sending any message, especially either in haste and/or when emotions are involved. (Again, including another volunteer or relevant leadership may be a great way to avoid confusion, misinterpretation etc.)
- Before sending and/or responding to a video message be cautious of the time of day, who you are responding to and/or the reason for the video chat/post in the first place. (SEE THE NOTE AT END OF THIS SECTION)

VIDEO COMMUNICATIONS/VIDEO CHATTING

As technology continues to evolve, so does video communication or video chatting. It has become a great way to communicate face-to-face. Please ensure that all video chatting or communication is pre-planned and/or has the approval of ministry leadership. When possible, we recommend a three way video chat to avoid miscommunication. This would be expected when working with minors and/or vulnerable adults.

While there may be times that video chatting one on one is appropriate for various ministerial accompaniment opportunities when working with adults, please ensure that you take great care to be clear of expectations of the video chat and time length of such chat. It is also important again to mention the considerations of: time of day, what you are wearing, what is in your background.

OTHER CONCERNS:

Always avoid any communication that might be construed as having inappropriate sexual or romantic overtones. Do not reply to any such communications, especially from a minor or vulnerable adult; make a copy of such inappropriate communication and notify your ministry leadership immediately.

Remember that there is no such thing as a private communication; if it's on email, social media, phone applications; it is public. All e-mails and messages are logged and archived, and have the potential of being forwarded to other parties. Your communication can quickly become a public matter.

- Unlike verbal communication, any form of written communication has a form of permanence. (Especially online even though it's from your personal phone, computer or tablet)
- There should be no expectation of privacy, especially when dealing with a public ministry and most especially when working with and serving minors or vulnerable adults.

FINAL NOTES REGARDING MINORS:

- At no time is one-on-one video chatting appropriate with minors or vulnerable adults.
 - If this occurs, terminate the conversation as quickly as you can and notify your ministry leadership immediately.
- At no time should you reach out and engage in a personal conversation with a minor through email, messaging or video chatting.

SECTION SIX - PHONE CALLS AND TEXT MESSAGING

The same standards and cautions that apply to email and messaging must be maintained when communication occurs through phone calls or via text messages. Appropriate and healthy boundaries should be adhered to when using text messaging or speaking with anyone regarding ministry, especially when messaging or calling youth or vulnerable adults. Frequent and ongoing communication through phone calls or text with an individual can suggest an inappropriate relationship.

- All ministers and/or volunteers should exercise good judgment at all times when communicating with people through a phone call or a personal text message.
- Dinner time, weekends, early hours - even if families don't often have specific dinner time, should be respected.
- While anyone we minister to might be on the phone or texting late into evening hours, ministry leaders and volunteers should set and communicate the timeframe when it is acceptable to make or receive non-emergency professional calls or text messages.*
- Phone calls and text messages are for ministry purposes ONLY, so good judgment should be used when offering their home or personal cell phone numbers to volunteers

**Emergency calls/text may occur, if it does please communicate to your ministry leader immediately.*

Finally the use of cell phones has facilitated the use of picture or video taking, please refer back to photograph/video consent and ensure you don't keep videos / pictures of anyone in your ministry - especially minors and vulnerable adults. It is imperative that as a leader you protect the identity of those being photographed and/or video recorded in your care. Great care and vigilance must be exercised at all times to ensure all participants are comfortable in photo or video talking exchanges. It is always inappropriate for a volunteer or ministry leader to just take a photo of a minor or vulnerable adult. It is also worth reminding again, it is inappropriate to initiate a personal conversation through text or phone call.

Best Practices

- Set up a text message tree that is initiated by youth leaders, sends out blanket messages to inform youth / parents / guardians about events and so that your cell phone number remains unknown (ie. www.callingpost.com)

Help Note: Set up a good registration form at the beginning of the year with questions regarding the use of cell phone numbers, social media apps and texting rules with both minors and parents/guardians; this can facilitate the use of this technology throughout the year without concern. (See suggested forms by Diocese of Orange)

SECTION SEVEN – VIDEO CONFERENCING, WEBINARS, ONLINE OR VIRTUAL CLASSES

The same standards that applied to last two sections must be maintained when communication occurs through video conferencing, webinars and online or virtual classrooms. These tools are imperative to share the faith and have a small faith discussion in a remote/distance learning environment and when age appropriate they can facilitate great dialogue, engagement and/or an evangelizing opportunity. Great care must be taken from leadership to be as communicative as possible - inform parents of what will occur or be discussed and engage participants with log in information and relevant details.

- All ministers and/or volunteers should exercise good judgment at all times when online, this includes but is not limited to comments said or written on chats, how they dress, what their background in their video has or doesn't have. *(see pgs. 18-19 of this document for more information for volunteers and for minors)*
- Please be aware of important times for families - dinner time, weekends and early hours - even if families don't often have specific dinner time or wake up times. Certain decorum and times should be respected.
- Video Conferences, webinars and online classes have the ability to be recorded, please make sure to inform parents and students ALWAYS when they are being recorded. A friendly reminder at the beginning of each session can go a long way *(keep in mind some may not feel like they could share openly if they are being recorded and take this into consideration)*.
 - *Even if it is not being recorded, it is wise to have extra safe environment trained and fingerprinted volunteers taking notes of comments, body language to ensure everyone is comfortable at all times.*
- Always inform parents beforehand and provide them with a schedule if able. Also when able, please send instructions prior to all meetings/classes. Parent have the right to know about schedules in advance and of any changes
 - Please Note: Parents have a right to check in on their son/daughter at any time during any online church related activity. However, if parents plan to stay for the entirety of the class or attend on a regular basis. It is prudent to share with Catechist or Teacher before the class, event or session and if they will be a regular, they will need to adhere to all safe environment and fingerprinting requirements.
- Video Conferences, webinars, online class spaces are for ministry purposes ONLY, so there should be no after hour usage of these tools.

Best Practices

- Never have one adult and one minor or vulnerable adult at any given time on a video conference or online class. Must have at least two certified adults. (see page 4 for more details)
 - Consider using waiting rooms to avoid this situation or plan a leaders/volunteer meeting prior to the class so once the class gets started, all adults are present.
 - If another certified adult will not be able to participate in a particular session, have a backup plan to involve another volunteer or a parent (keep contact info readily available) to be present.
 - If you are not able to fulfill the requirement of a minimum of two certified adults per an online session of minors/adolescents, it is prudent to cancel the class all together and reschedule.

- When dividing up small groups online with young people and/or vulnerable adults, ensure that someone from your team (ie. Peer leaders, adults, volunteers) are observing and ensuring that everyone is comfortable.
 - Also ensure that you are not putting individual adults and minors together at any moment. When dividing up into small groups, peer ministry leaders can be a good alternative when doing something fun or discussion based for a short period of time.
 - If parents are present with their child on the same screen or on two screens, please ensure they are both added to the same small group; this will avoid again having a non-fingerprinted or safe environment trained adult with minors.
 - Sometimes it may be prudent not to break up into small groups even if you are able to.

- Guest speakers don't need to be fingerprinted or safety environment trained, however they should NEVER for any reason speak to any minor/vulnerable adult or be in a breakout room with minors. Guest speakers do need to follow the speaker approval process of the Diocese. (<http://presenters.rcbo.org/>)

SECTION EIGHT - SOCIAL MEDIA / SOCIAL NETWORKING

A social network service or commonly referred to as “social media” utilizes software to build online social networks for communities of people who share interests and activities. Most services are primarily web based or phone application based and provides various ways for users to interact, such as chat, messaging, email, video or voice chat, file sharing, blogging, discussion groups, and so on. Social media is to be used in an age appropriate manner, observing the restrictions on use for certain age groups (as noted elsewhere in this document).

A variety of social networking tools are being used by millions of people on a regular basis, making it seem that social networking has become a part of everyday life.

- In 2020, it is estimated that over 4 billion people are using at least one social media site. The most popular sites, as of writing this are: www.facebook.com, www.youtube.com, www.instagram.com, www.snapchat.com and www.twitter.com, www.twitch.tv, www.pinterest.com, www.reddit.com, www.tumblr.com,
- Phone applications and communication via chat or video chat have also been very popular and they include – Facebook messenger, WhatsApp, Google Hangouts or Google Meet, GroupMe, Kik, Skype, Periscope and Marco Polo.

Social networking has revolutionized the way we communicate and share information with one another. Therefore, it can also be a way to connect people with the church and the church’s activities with people. While we don’t discourage the use any of these forms of communication we do expect the use of caution, prudence and leadership when choosing to engage in any of these forms of communication.

On any social network site, personal opinions and discussions are often conducted. It is essential for pastoral ministers to remember that even on the web others may recognize them as representing the values of the Catholic Church, therefore what they post should never be in conflict with the teachings and values of the Catholic Church.

If a professional staff minister wants to use social networking sites or messaging apps for ministry purposes, it is suggested that they create a professional social media or messaging account that is separate from their personal account. This account should be seen as an official extension of the ministry organizations web presence and administrated by an adult and should be approved by the parish pastor or supervisor in which the social networking site will be used. Volunteers should not set up a special ministry account without the permission of the professional staff minister and/or the pastor.

- There is a difference between initiating a ‘friend request’ and accepting one. Pastoral Ministers and official church ministry accounts must not initiate and ‘seek’ friends on a professional social media account. **Those we minister to must request you as a friend first, or there has been written consent from the parent/guardian.**
 - This may be hard for peer ministers to understand especially if they are similar age. (ie. A junior in high school who is a peer minister and wants to be friends with a sophomore in the confirmation program.) While this may not be inappropriate initially; it can be a slippery slope and can lead to 18 year old volunteers with minors as social media friends.

For ministers and/or volunteers using the Internet for accessing information about the people you minister to is a violation of their privacy, even if that information is publicly accessible. Take great care to avoid this kind of behavior that can be misconstrued or considered stalking.

Those working with minors under 18

- Please note the legal policies for Social Media Companies that you are using and avail yourself of this information when talking to parents. While we realize that misrepresentation occurs, especially when serving those under 13, we must keep in line with terms of service. See examples below of the most popular social media sites: Facebook, Snapchat and Twitter:
 - *“You may not use the Facebook if: you are under 13 years old,”*
<http://www.facebook.com/terms.php>
 - *“No one under 13 is allowed to create an account or use the Services”*
<https://www.snap.com/en-US/terms/>
- One who ministers and works in pastoral settings with minors and vulnerable adults, who have a “personal” social media site, should never advertise that site, personal page or account nor “friend” a minor or vulnerable adult to their personal site.
- If you become aware of information that is in the public domain of such a site, you are responsible for information that must be reported if a minor or vulnerable adult has been abused and/or harmed, is being abused and/or harmed or is under threat of harm.
- Ministry Leadership and adult volunteers should never be “personal friends,” even if requested. Please refer the minor or minors to the parish ministry page and make your parish ministry leadership aware that you have denied or have them on your request list.

On-line Gaming

Finally, those who minister and work in pastoral settings with minors and vulnerable adults should take care in their involvement with on-line gaming. While, for many, this is a recreational alternative, it is also an increasing opportunity for social networking and engagement. Pastoral ministers should take great care in maintaining a healthy boundary between on-line gaming with participants of their own age and on-line gaming with minors.*

This includes but is not limited to PC games, consoles (Xbox, PS4 and Switch) and/or phone games. The popularity of multiplayer games like PUBG, Fortnite, Apex Legends League of Legends, Minecraft, will only continue to offer a place to play, communicate and connect.

**Especially with minors or vulnerable adults in their ministry programs they may be serving.*

Best Practices

- The professional minister with permission from the pastor/supervisor should, if they choose to, create an online group on social media sites that both young people and adult volunteers can join and interact without full access to one another's profile.
- It is important that adult volunteers while online and behind a "virtual identity" maintain a Christian attitude and action. They will be held to the same standards "on and off line"
- It is important that adult volunteers are engaged and made aware of the following recommendations and guidelines. They are to adhere to the same standard and no exceptions are to be made. This is done in order to protect the minors, vulnerable adults, the volunteers and the ministry.

SECTION NINE- BLOGGING, VIDEO BLOG AND VIDEO CHANNELS

The Web is no longer simply a repository of information—it has become a participatory platform for content creation and distribution. One method to develop and disseminate content is through a blog, wiki page, video blog and/or video channel. The word “blog” is a shortening of the term Web log or Web-based log.

Those who minister and work in pastoral settings in the Diocese of Orange may establish and publish blogs and/or video channels for ministry-related purposes with the prior approval of their pastor or supervisor. As a representative of the Church, blogging or video channels should be conducted in a professional manner for ministry purposes.

As with any professional communication, ministry blogs or video chats should **not** be used:

- For any personal communication or agenda.
- To conduct or promote outside business activities.
- To defame or cause defamation of the character of any individual, organization or institution.
- To divulge any personal information about those being ministered to, or jeopardize their safety in any other way.

Personal blogs or Video channels should not be advertised to minors or vulnerable adults.

Best Practices

Those whose blogs or video channels support ministry are encouraged to publish information including, but not limited to:

- Fliers for upcoming activities, permission forms, calendar, and ministerial updates
- Additional links and references for faith formation
- Sacramental preparation information including: class times, checklists, sponsor resources, parent resources, etc.
- Descriptions of projects, including procedures, expectations, and suggested parent involvement
- Bible Studies and other spiritual links and prayer resources

SECTION TEN – APPENDIX & CURATION OF RESOURCES

When dealing with the newest technology or latest digital tools AND talking about ministry, it is easy to forget that while it has power to evangelize and engage it also has the power to destroy and hurt. Below are a few local and national resources, when dealing with either sex trafficking or missing and exploited children through the use of this technology.

- **Human Trafficking Orange County Task Force -**

<https://www.egovlink.com/ochumantrafficking/faq.asp>

- **NCMEC: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children**

Charles B. Wang International Children’s Building

699 Prince Street

Alexandria VA 22314-3175

1-800-843-5678

www.missingkids.com

The Nation’s Resource Center for Child Protection

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children’s® (NCMEC) mission

Is to help prevent child abduction and sexual exploitation; help find missing children; and assist victims of child abduction and sexual exploitation, their families, and the professionals who serve them.

- **CyberTipline:**

The Congressionally mandated CyberTipline is a reporting mechanism for cases of child sexual exploitation including child pornography, online enticement of children for sex acts, molestation of children outside the family, sex tourism of children, child victims of prostitution, and unsolicited obscene material sent to a child. Reports may be made 24-hours per day, 7 days per week online at www.cybertipline.com or by calling 1-800-843-5678.

- **Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC)**

The ICAC Task Force Program was created to help State and local law enforcement agencies enhance their investigative response to offenders who use the Internet, online communication systems, or other computer technology to sexually exploit children. To learn more: <https://www.icactaskforce.org/>

STANDARDS FROM THE OFFICE OF CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION Norma Aguero, Director (naguero@rcbo.org)

Diocese of Orange Code of Conduct:

- English - <https://www.rcbo.org/wp-content/uploads/PASM-3-30-2015-Eng-FINAL.pdf>
- Spanish - <https://www.rcbo.org/wp-content/uploads/PASM-3-30-2015-Span-FINAL.pdf>

We also encourage parents to read the state's guidelines for parents on protecting their child's privacy online,

- <https://oag.ca.gov/privacy/facts/online-privacy/child-privacy>

Code of Conduct for Youth Participants

(Should be shared with parents beforehand):

- Please dress as if meeting in person, your clothing should be modest and appropriate (no pajamas please).
- Please make sure nothing inappropriate or unseemly is in your surroundings when broadcasting video and audio. Please make sure your setting is tidy.
- Two-way streaming from a restroom is never acceptable.
- Please use care to join from a non-intimate setting such as a home-office or similar room.
- Please Note: Parents have a right to check in on you at any time during church related activities. However, if they plan to stay it is prudent to share with Catechist or Teacher before the class, event or session.
- Child/Parent separate screens, never should they be

Protect your Digital Identity and Reputation:

- Ensure that no personal information is shared on line by you or your students.
- Keep personal matters offline. If the meeting has a sharing component, please ensure that it is done appropriately and on topic.
- Your username(s) should be professional and profile pictures and any other photos appropriate.
- Accountability is important, hold a professional standard with all participants. This includes but not limited to: language, gestures, humor, discussion and online behavior.
- Be careful of using Copyrighted material. Check your sources before sharing

Zoom, Google Classroom or the like Tips, Best Practices:

- **Share Link-** the link to each live classroom session must be shared with another supervisory adult, e.g. Director of Faith Formation, Youth Ministry Director, etc. to allow for another adult to view the live learning session. (*Think of this as the ability to view the classroom through a door window or walking into a classroom*).
- Parents must be given the ability and the corresponding links or phone numbers to join the session. Offer an open invitation to parents/guardians to observe the session.
- Do not make meetings or classrooms public. In Zoom, there are two options to make a meeting private: require a meeting password or use the waiting room feature and control the admittance of guests.
- Do not share a link to a teleconference or classroom on an unrestricted publicly available social media post. Provide the link directly to specific people.
- Manage screen sharing options. In Zoom, change screen sharing to “Host Only.”
- Ensure users are using the updated version of remote access/meeting applications. In January 2020, Zoom updated their software. In their security update, the teleconference software provider added passwords by default for meetings and disabled the ability to randomly scan for meetings to join.
- Check these sites for additional information:
 - <https://zoom.us/docs/doc/School%20Administrators%20Guide%20to%20Rolling%20Out%20Zoom.pdf>
 - <https://blog.zoom.us/keep-uninvited-guests-out-of-your-zoom-event/>

Media Safety Tips for Families

- **Keep Screens Visible:** If possible, set up your student’s desktop and laptop computers in a family room or kitchen, so you can monitor what your child is viewing online.
- **Collect Passwords from Younger Children:** If your child does not want to share their passwords with you, discuss why. Young children do not need Internet privacy.
- **Clean your Electronic Devices and Do it Often:** COVID-19 has taught us that proper and frequent hygiene will keep the virus away! Now that most of the instruction is done online-it is important to clean all electronic devices frequently and keep them fully charged.
- **Set Parental Controls:** This will help to avoid any possibility of stumbling upon inappropriate sites. <https://www.parents.com/parenting/better-parenting/advice/a-guide-to-parental-controls-by-device/>
- **Teach Kindness:** Let your child know that they do not need to be friends with everyone, but they also should never type something mean about someone online. That is the same as saying it to their face. <https://cyberbullying.org/cyberbullying-warning-signs>
- **Discuss Stranger Safety:** Make sure children know not to share where they live, their name, where they go to school, or any other identifiable information.