

Dear Parent,

God created the world as a beautiful and good place in which He has entrusted people to be its caretakers or stewards. He also entrusted to your care as a parent the responsibility to care for and reveal God's love to your child. You don't have to look far to discover that there are also those who would misuse or abuse God's goodness and subject other to pain and suffering. You, as a parent, have been challenged through the years to protect your child from such dangers. Protecting your child from sexual abuse is a shared priority between the home and the Catholic community of faith. The Catholic Diocese of San Diego is fully committed to assisting you in protecting your child against sexual abuse. The Church asks you to be a vigilant observer as well as an understanding listener with your teen. Together through awareness, education, and communication, we can continue our sacred mission as a community of faith to protect every child of becoming a victim of sexual abuse.

Did You Know?

Sexual abuse facts:

1. In 90% of sexual abuse cases, the victims knew their abusers.
2. 1 in 3 girls are sexually abused by the age of 18; 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused by the age of 16.
3. Date rape can occur even if the victim already knew the abuser and even if he/she had agreed to go out on the date, and had sexual relation in the past.

Grooming Processes by Adult Sexual Predators

Grooming is a process used by an adult to win a parent and/or child's trust as he/she prepares to sexually abuse the child. Adult grooming tactics include:

- Adults pretend they are teens on the Internet to lure teenagers into "friendly" communication
- Repeated unwarranted gift-giving; flattery; support for the teen breaking rules that parents ordinarily enforce
- Adults on the Internet (and even peers) who manipulate the insecurities and weaknesses of the teenager online
- Skilled manipulation and persuasion
- Using the victim's emotion and common sense against him/her

Talk to your teen how to establish healthy boundaries for friendship and Internet safety:

- Never post personal information on a social networks that could be used by a sexual predator
- Remember that a cell phone picture that is sent via Internet can be downloaded by anyone
- Never trust that the person you think you are communicating with online is the name, age, sex and description that he/she is providing on the network

Useful Websites for further reading:

1. The National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information: www.nccanch.acf.hhs.gov
2. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children: www.netismartz.org www.missingkids.com
3. Prevent Child Abuse America: www.preventchildabuse.org