



# Safe Environment Newsletter

## ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS

2020 Volume 2

### Video Calls



#### What is Video Conferencing?

**Video conferencing** is a visual communication session between two or more users regardless of their location, featuring audio and video content transmission in real time.

The Bible teaches us limitations and boundaries to draw and how we might respond to the world through video conferencing/calling apps:

**Watch your steps.** “And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.” (*Colossians 3:17 NABRE*)

**Do what is right.** “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” (*Philippians 4:8 NABRE*)

**Be wise & do His will.** “Watch carefully then how you live, not as foolish persons but as wise, making the most of the opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not continue in ignorance, but try to understand what is the will of the Lord.” (*Ephesians 5:15-17 NABRE*)

#### Professional Boundaries and Safe Interactions

Just as classroom doors have windows for accountability, churches must implement processes that **ensure all video communication is monitored and supervised**.

##### Directing Communication:

The world of WhatsApp, Zoom, Google Handouts, Skype etc., makes it really easy for leaders and minors to have one-on-one communication. When leaders need to communicate with a child or youth in a more direct manner such as checking in, sending call access information, or providing curriculum documents, they should communicate with parents via email. This ensures that all interactions are recorded and transparent.

##### Scheduling Meetings:

If the leaders want to facilitate discussions in a video conference, the interaction must be scheduled in advance and parents and other leaders in the parish/diocese need to be informed. Unscheduled calls, chats or conversations can create liability and are strongly discouraged.

Respectful behavior and proper etiquette online must be maintained just as one would in a classroom or church environment. The following guidelines can help hold up these same standards.

- All participants should be dressed professionally as they would be at a regular church meeting.
- The call must be conducted from non-personal spaces.
- Conversations must remain appropriate and on topic.
- Remember, at least 2 leaders must be present during all interactions for safety and accountability. The call should be recorded and sent to senior leadership for archiving.
- For further security and to limit distractions, disable 1:1 chat and screensharing.

##### Accountability:

Parents are important allies in keeping children safe and must be informed about how ministry leaders and volunteers will be communicating with their children. Parents should be emailed in advance for all video conferencing calls and when they are scheduled. Parents must also have ways to report unscheduled interactions or concerns they may have about their child's safety.

*“The digital world can be an environment rich in humanity. A network not of wires but of people.”*

- Pope Francis, 48<sup>th</sup> World Communications Day