

2019

Safe Haven Sunday

Equipping the Family - Safeguarding Children



Implementation Guide

<http://omf.stcdio.org/from-the-director/clergy-resources/safe-haven-sunday-march-2-3-2019-resources/>

Equipping the Family, Safeguarding Children

Safe Haven Sunday is celebrating its first year of raising awareness throughout dioceses and parishes in the United States regarding the negative impacts of pornography on individuals, marriages, families and society.

Safe Haven Sunday is a weekend set aside by dioceses and parishes to directly address the harms of pornography in an appropriate way. Within the context of the Mass, dioceses and parishes are able to provide teaching and resources that will support and protect individuals, marriages and families in making all homes a safe haven.

It is inspired by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' formal statement *Create in Me a Clean Heart: A Pastoral Response to Pornography*, where they explain, "The use of pornography by anyone in the home deprives the home of its role as a **safe haven** and has negative effects throughout a family's life and across generations."

Implementing Safe Haven Sunday is accomplished by following step-by-step instructions.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is Safe Haven Sunday?

A. It is a weekend within the liturgical calendar selected by the diocese or parish to directly address the harms of pornography and to provide resources to support and protect individuals, marriages, and families in overcoming pornography and making their homes safe.

Q. Why is Covenant Eyes involved with Safe Haven Sunday?

A. Covenant Eyes is committed to creating faith-based resources that foster the virtue of chastity and the tools to overcome pornography use and addiction (their flagship service is Internet Accountability and Filtering). Safe Haven Sunday is one of the many resources Covenant Eyes has developed to assist U.S. dioceses and parishes implement the USCCB's formal statement *Create in Me a Clean Heart: A Pastoral Response to Pornography*, one step at a time.

Q. Is Safe Haven Sunday implemented at the diocesan or parish level?

A. Both. This is a weekend that can be initiated by a diocese and/or parish. If the diocesan bishop requests that parishes implement this weekend, the diocese plays a leading role in the weekend, primarily by way of communicating necessary actions to implement the weekend and at the same time spearheading communication with the parishes and the public. The parish role is to communicate during the weekend liturgy and provide materials to parishioners (optional). The Office of Marriage & Family will also be providing speakers to address religious education classes on the topic with high school students and their parents.

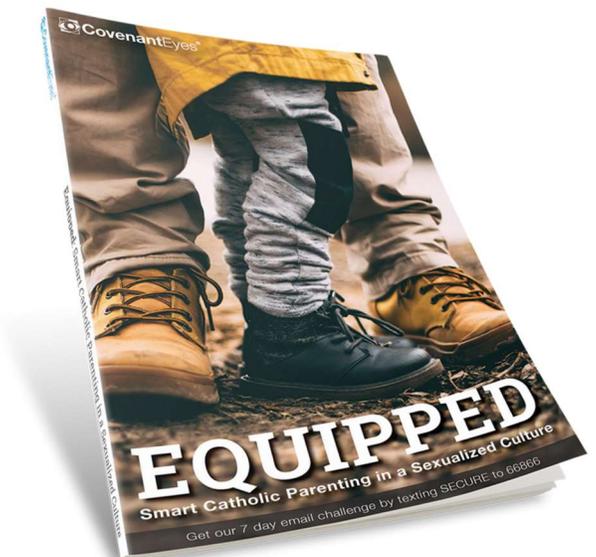
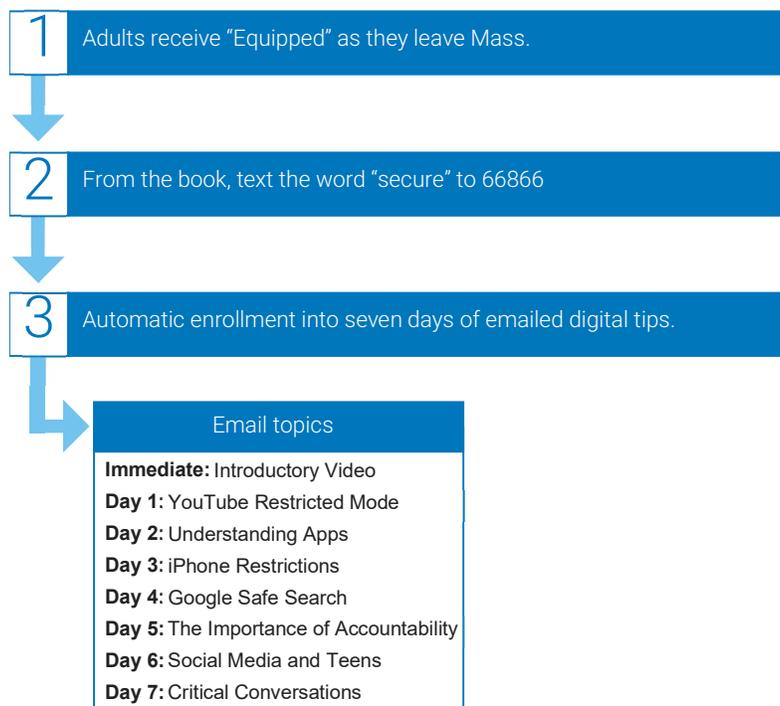
Q. Who sets the date for Safe Haven Sunday?

A. The diocese sets the date for their diocesan implementation. All parishes in the State of Minnesota will celebrate Safe Haven Sunday on the same day.

Q. What role does the parish priest have in the implementation of Safe Haven Sunday?

A. This effort is designed to be led primarily by the parish priest. Enlosed in this packet are all the tools to make Safe Haven Sunday a success, including homily helps, general intercessions, prayer card, bulletin blurbs and insert, as well as the opportunity to purchase educational resources to distribute to parishioners. The Covenant Eyes' book, *Equipped: Smart Catholic Parenting in a Sexualized Culture*, which is available in both English and Spanish, and a free seven day text-to-opt-in program, also available in English and Spanish, provides practical tips that adults can take to create safer digital environments. **Throughout the book, readers are encouraged to sign-up for the seven day text-to-opt-in program by texting SECURE to 66866.**

7 Day Email Chart:



Also available in Spanish!

Q. What costs are involved with Safe Haven Sunday?

A. The only cost involved is the purchasing of resources. The book *Equipped* (\$2/per book) or the pamphlet *Raising Chaste Children* (50 cents each) Parishes place the order by using the Diocesan Order Form provided in the this packet. The Office of Marriage & Family collects the order forms and checks and we order the books together to save postage.

Parish Implementation Plan



Five Months Until Implementation

- Meeting with parish priest and parish staff members to discuss the Safe Haven Sunday concept, seek approval, and decide on implementation date.
- Meeting with Pastoral Council to discuss Safe Haven Sunday in the parish, including budget for purchasing resources.



Four Months Until Implementation

- Parish priest informs parish of the initiative through its normal communication channels.
- Determine roles and responsibilities of parish staff members and volunteer assistants.
- Who will help with the printing and/or mailing of the introduction letter of Safe Haven Sunday from the priest to parish households?
- Who will order copies of the book *Equipped* or *Raising Chaste Children* to distribute to all parishioners on Safe Haven Sunday?
- Who will make sure the bulletin blurbs and the bulletin insert are included in the parish bulletin on the designated dates?
- Who will post information about Safe Haven Sunday on the parish webpage and/or social media?
- Who will print the General Intercessions and make them available at the ambo for Safe Haven Sunday?
- Who will help pass out the resources after the closing song of the Vigil Mass and Sunday Masses? etc.
- Parish representative places order for resources – Deadline is December 1, 2018.



One Month Until Implementation

- Resources are picked up at Office of Marriage & Family and can be shipped (shipping fee will be charged) arrive at the parish.



Month of Implementation

- 4 weeks out
 - Parish priest writes about Safe Haven Sunday in his bulletin or newsletter column.
 - Safe Haven Sunday promoted on parish social media.
- 1 week out - First bulletin blurb: Weekend prior to Safe Haven Sunday.
- Implementation Weekend - Safe Haven Sunday
 - Second bulletin blurb: Safe Haven Sunday (may also be used as Pulpit Announcement) and one-page bulletin Insert
 - Homily
 - General intercessions
 - Resources are distributed after closing song
- 1 week after
 - Third and final bulletin blurb thanking parishioners for participating in Safe Haven Sunday.
 - Safe Haven Sunday / Thank You posted on parish social media.

Weekend Prior to Safe Haven Sunday

Safe Haven Sunday: Equipping the Family, Safeguarding Children

The family home is to be a safe haven. But the inappropriate use of technology in the home deprives it of this role, and is the greatest threat to the sanctity of marriages and families today. Pornography and other online threats are often one click away, and parents can feel overwhelmed with not knowing how to best protect their children in our fast-paced digital world.

Next weekend, **March 2/3, the parishes in the Diocese of St. Cloud** are taking a bold step to help families by celebrating Safe Haven Sunday. This awareness day will provide access to practical resources that any caring adult can use to protect themselves and our young people from online risks.

Please join us with your prayers and presence as we prepare for this unique event.

To learn more, please contact **[insert parish contact information]** or visit <http://omf.stcdio.org/pornography/>.

Weekend of Safe Haven Sunday

Safe Haven Sunday: Equipping the Family, Safeguarding Children

The parishes of the Diocese of St. Cloud are setting aside this weekend, **March 2/3**, as Safe Haven Sunday in order to give focused time and resources to address the harmfulness of pornography and other online threats to marriages, family life and culture.

Today's awareness day is celebrated through prayer and a reflection within the context of the Mass. After Mass, each individual and family will be given Covenant Eyes' book, *Equipped: Smart Catholic Parenting in a Sexualized Culture* or the pamphlet, *Raising Chaste Children*. The book, *Equipped*, includes a unique seven-day text-to-opt-in program: *The Equipped 7-Day Challenge*. This Challenge provides practical tips any

caring adult can take to create safer digital environments for themselves and our young people.

Thank you for celebrating with us! If you have any questions about this awareness weekend, please contact **[insert parish contact information]** or visit <http://omf.stcdio.org/pornography/>.

Weekend after Safe Haven Sunday

SAFE HAVEN SUNDAY: THANK YOU!

Our Safe Haven Sunday was a big success!

The parishes of the Diocese of St. Cloud extends a tremendous “Thank You!” to all who made Safe Haven Sunday possible and to all parishioners for their support of the education and awareness on the issues of pornography at our Sunday celebration.

Again, thanks to our parish community for your openness to the topics of internet safety and the dignity of the human person in light of the pornographic culture.

Just because Safe Haven Sunday is over for this year, it doesn't mean our efforts to make our homes safe havens is over. Stay informed at <http://omf.stcdio.org/pornography/>, and learn more about how to protect and guide your family and friends.

**The next page is the optional bulletin insert for
Safe Haven Sunday**



Safe Haven Sunday

Equipping the Family, Safeguarding Children

Pornography changes the way children and adults think about sex and marriage. A recent survey of American teens showed that they believe not recycling is now a worse issue than watching pornography. It's time to reclaim virtue and protect our young people from the tempting pull of inappropriate online content.

Take a step to create a safe haven in your home by joining *The Equipped 7-Day Challenge: A Digital Crash Course* by **texting SECURE to 66866** to receive seven days of emailed digital tips!



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Homily Sample

I want to begin this homily with a brief prayer.

“Lord Jesus Christ, we pray that You would cover us, our families, and all of our possessions with Your love and the power of Your Most Precious Blood. Bind and drive out from among us any spirits who are opposed to Your Kingdom. Soften our hearts and heal our wounds so that we may receive Your Word today. Surround all of us with Your heavenly Angels, Saints, the strong arms of St. Joseph, and the mantle of Our Blessed Mother. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

Consider this hypothetical situation: What if we all knew that some defect in the water pipes of this church was resulting in harmful exposure to a high percentage of parishioners and running the high likelihood of serious physical health risks and even death ... and we did nothing? You would think that is crazy and irresponsible. You might even demand the pastor and other parish staff be replaced. We basically have that very situation, but in the area of spiritual health. And most people hear nothing about it from pulpits or read nothing about it in the parish bulletin. Little is said or done to battle the crisis which is at epidemic proportions. Today, I want to discuss a topic that impacts many men and women across many age categories. While the impact is broad, it does seem true that this spiritual health risk seems to have a more significant hold on men and boys. **I think it is necessary to speak on the topic of the pervasive presence and use of pornography in our society.**

All indications are that this is a widespread problem in our society, made ever broader by easy access and free content through the internet.

The statistics are alarming.

- Studies indicate that 93% of boys and 62% of girls were exposed to pornography before the age of 18.¹
- 71% of teens have done something to hide what they do online from their parents. This includes clearing browser history, minimizing a browser when in view, deleting inappropriate videos, lying about behavior, using a phone instead of a computer to browse, blocking parents with social media privacy settings, using private browsing, disabling parental controls, or having email or social media accounts unknown to parents.²
- 57% of young people seek out porn once a month.³

- 75% said their parents had never discussed Internet pornography with them.⁴
- One in 10 American males view porn daily.⁵
- 68% of men and 18% of women said they used pornography at least once every week. Another 17% of men and another 30% of women said they used pornography 1-2 times per month.⁶
- 56% of divorce involves one party having “an obsessive interest in pornographic websites.”⁷

No one is immune from this invasion, and the problem exists in Catholic homes as it does in other homes. I do not want to be misunderstood as if the problem does not exist among girls and women too. However, boys and men fall prey to this at significantly higher rates. In all categories of statistics measuring things like type of content viewed, age of first exposure, and frequency of use, boys and men outpace girls and women by large percentage margins. One study indicated that the strongest predictor of use of explicit material is simply being male.

One of the realities of this topic is that a person, through no fault of his or her own, can be exposed to this material quite innocently. A misspelled word in a search engine can lead to exposure and that can place a hook in a person. If we are not careful, first exposure develops into repeated curiosity and that develops into habitual use that impedes healthy human development and spiritual development. First exposure happened easily enough in past generations, but we must admit that with the dawn of the internet, it happens much more easily and frequently now, and it comes directly into your home. First exposure to explicit material now happens in our homes, right in the room where your child is on the computer, tablet, or smartphone.

This is a matter that cannot be ignored in the parish, in your family life, or in each person’s examination of conscience. We cannot be silent while souls are being ensnared. Use of this explicit material makes its users spiritually crippled and deadened. It is serious sin that needs to be confessed, and especially before coming forward to receive Holy Communion. It becomes enslaving. It negatively impacts personal discipline, dating, marriage, and even the ability of a young person to discern a call from God to priesthood or to a religious vocation.

I hope I do not cause rash judgment or awkward situations here, but given the statistics on use of explicit material, **parents, you should likely just assume that your child has been exposed**, and that your middle school and high school aged child may already have a habit of use. You must speak with them. You must first treat this issue in your own life with serious

resolve. You must take measures to control and eliminate the entry points for this material into your home. Use internet accountability and filtering software and even have everyone in the house turn in all cellular and internet devices each evening, where they remain locked in the parents' bedroom until morning. Men, dear brothers in the faith, you especially need to take such measures to protect yourselves, your wives, and your children. You need to live courageously in your fatherly role of protector in your home.

As your spiritual father, I want to set the tone for our response to this moral epidemic by saying that in the spiritual family of this parish, no one is permitted to shame anyone else about this struggle. The devil knows what he is doing in trafficking this filth. Anyone who is struggling needs to know they are loved, they are supported, and that they are called to true and authentic human relationships. Jesus gives us the example from the woman caught in adultery who easily could have been shamed. Instead, He says, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again" (John 8:11). Therefore, in this parish, I am opening this topic for conversation, and I am asking you to continue it in your home and with your family. Opening this to conversation can allow healing to take place.

This is because in talking openly and honestly we will draw each other, our spouses, and our children into more authentic relationships that, together with confession, prayer, struggle, and acts of penance, will result in lessening the grip of false virtual "relationships." Anyone struggling needs to be prudent, but opening this matter— not to everyone, but to a trusted friend—can offer accountability in the battle. I want you to know that there are in fact people who do not use explicit material. The battle is possible. Victory is already won with Christ Jesus. Moreover, others in this parish will be ready to stand with you as you engage in battle. It is time to reject the devil's message that tells you to keep this matter hidden. Kept hidden in the darkness, he increases his power over you. In the light, he flees.

Furthermore, we are also going to confess this matter with humility and honesty each and every time there is a fall and a sin. God is ready to meet you in this struggle. He already loves you as you hear this invitation to confession. He loves you and He wants you to have a deeper relationship with Him.

To fight against the evil of pornography in our lives and the lives of our families, I am going to suggest a few important spiritual weapons.

- I want every person in this parish to learn how to pray the Rosary to invoke Mary in this battle. She brought us her Son who crushed the serpent's head. Her intercession

is powerful. Pray it in your home with your family. Additionally, you may wish to add the Novena for Purity to this time of prayer. You can find this information in the bulletin and at <http://omf.stcdio.org/pornography/>

- Reverent worship is a weapon in the battle and so, in addition to faithful attention at Mass, I ask each of you to sign up for a Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration, or to share an hour with your family or another friend. Come receive blessing in the Lord's real presence, and train your eyes to look upon the Holy One in our midst.
- Men, I encourage you to invoke Saint Joseph in this battle and to ask his intercession. See in him a great companion and example of what it means to be a man of faith, strength and purity in the family.
- Don't forget the value of reading and praying with Sacred Scripture, taking on practices of fasting and using devotionals like Holy Water and religious medals.
- Finally, make a regular confession and take the necessary steps to find an accountability partner.

Today, our **diocese** celebrates Safe Haven Sunday—an opportunity to appropriately spread awareness about the issue of pornography. Safe Haven Sunday is an annual initiative inspired by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' statement *Create in Me a Clean Heart: A Pastoral Response to Pornography*, where they explain, "The use of pornography by anyone in the home deprives the home of its role as a **safe haven** and has negative effects throughout a family's life and across generations."

The 2018 Safe Haven Sunday resource being provided today to each one of you and your families is the Covenant Eyes book, *Equipped: Smart Catholic Parenting in a Sexualized Culture*. On the front cover of *Equipped*, you will find simple instructions to join a seven-day text-to-opt in email program. These emails contain videos with easy instructions for turning your home into a safe haven. The videos explain the latest apps, Google Safe Search, YouTube Restricted Mode, social media risks, how to address online pornography, and more. Again, this is all in video format, received in a series of emails. I know this resource will be helpful to you!

In conclusion, pornography is a grave offense against God and His gifts to men and women. God created men and women "in His image" to share in His divine life. Rather than respecting and cherishing this image of God, pornography promotes a harmful and destructive anthropology. It teaches people to use others as "objects"—in this case, a means of selfish, lustful gratification. In addition, since pornography attacks sexual desire and the conjugal act

itself, it wages war on marriage. Let us be strong men and women of purity, chaste and holy, and fight to preserve the garment of salvation we have received in Holy Baptism.

May God help us to do so against the snares of the pornography epidemic!

This homily was slightly modified from the message given by Reverend Father Robert T. Cooper, a Priest of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

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1. Chiara Sabina, Janis Wolak, and David Finkelhor, "The nature and dynamics of Internet pornography exposure for youth," *CyberPsychology and Behavior* 11 (2008): 691-693.
 2. Jamie Le, "The Digital Divide: How the Online Behavior of Teens is Getting Past Parents," McAfee.com. June 2012. <http://www.mcafee.com/us/resources/misc/digital-divide-study.pdf> (accessed Dec. 9, 2013).
 3. Barna Group, *The Porn Phenomenon: The Impact of Pornography In the Digital Age*, (Josh McDowell Ministry, 2016), 41.
 4. "Put porn in its place," *Psychologies*, Aug 2010. <http://www.psychologies.co.uk/put-porn-in-its-place> (accessed Dec. 27, 2012).
 5. Barna Group, *The Porn Phenomenon: The Impact of Pornography In the Digital Age*, (Josh McDowell Ministry, 2016), 142.
 6. Gert Martin Hald, "Gender differences in pornography consumption among young heterosexual danish adults," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 35 (2006): 577-585.
 7. Jonathan Dedmon, "Is the Internet bad for your marriage? Online affairs, pornographic sites playing greater role in divorces." Press Release from The Dilenschneider Group, Inc., Nov. 14, 2002. <http://www.pnnewswire.com/news-releases/is-the-internet-bad-for-your-marriage-online-affairs-pornographic-sitesplaying-greater-role-in-divorces-76826727.html> (accessed Dec. 27, 2012).

General Intercessions

Prayers to be added to Parish's Universal Prayers/Prayers of the Faithful.

For all leaders in government and in our Church, that they may lead with wisdom reflecting the Church's teaching on human dignity and sexuality, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

That the values of our faith may guide us in creating homes that are safe havens for our families, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who suffer from addictions, that they may seek support and come to know God's healing, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who struggle with pornography, that they will come to an appreciation of human dignity and experience conversion of heart which Christ offers, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Letter from Parish Priest to the parish

[Insert date]

[Insert feast day]

Dear friends,

As your pastor, I am always impressed by the love I see in the families of our parish community and am constantly giving God thanks for your many efforts that truly uphold the dignity of marriage and family life. Thank you!

As you work hard to create safe havens for your children and spouse, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and I wish to bring one particular issue to your attention. It's not easy to discuss, but it's important. That issue is pornography.

In November of 2016, the USCCB released a pastoral response to pornography, called *Create in Me a Clean Heart*. The intention of writing this document was to:

- offer healing and hope to those who have been wounded by pornography;
- articulate the Catholic Church's response to the pastoral crisis brought about by the production and use of pornography; and
- raise awareness of its pervasiveness and harms.

Why? Because pornography is hurting many people, including marriages and families, singles, priests and religious, and even children. It hurts the healthy process of

vocational discernment for our young people. Pornography use impacts the relationships of children with their parents, husbands with their wives (and vice versa), the pastor with his community, and most importantly, our relationship with our Lord.

In the formal statement, the USCCB speak directly to parents about being proactive about the issue of pornography in the life of the home with their children and together as a married couple ensure the home keeps its status as a safe haven for all. The Bishops state, "The use of pornography by anyone in the home deprives the home of its role as a safe haven and has negative effects throughout a family's life and across generation."

Thus, on **March 2/3** we will be celebrating the first annual Safe Haven Sunday with the theme "Equipping the Family, Safeguarding Children." This awareness effort is meant to draw our attention as a community to the seriousness of the issues of pornography and to recommit ourselves to take steps to ensure our homes are safe havens for all.

In the back of the church, I will have free resources for you to assist with striving for healthy and holy marriages and families, including how to talk to your children about internet dangers. But you don't have to wait. You can begin learning now by joining *The Equipped 7-Day Challenge: A Digital Crash Course* by texting SECURE TO 66866 to receive seven days of emailed digital tips!

I look forward to celebrating Safe Haven Sunday with you next weekend!

Through the intercession of the Holy Family of Nazareth, intercessors of the home, and St. Michael, I am,