

Dear Parents,

The safety of your children is always uppermost in your mind. We have taken many steps to do our part in ensuring that your children will be in a safe place when they are participating in the religious education programs at St. Raymond's. All of our staff and volunteers have received the required background checks and training.

The Church states with confidence that parents are the primary educators of their children. This is most true when we speak of the religious education of your children. This teaching flows from the natural bond that exists between parent and child, and from the very basis of our faith. You know your children best and you retain the duty to form your children in the faith. From you they learn their first prayers, and with you they will first experience the worship of God. They also learn from you how to live responsibly in this world.

Each year, we implement a program, Formation in Christian Chastity, to assist parents in the formation of their children in the virtue of chastity. The Catechism of the Catholic Church introduces the discussion of chastity as a vocation. We want to emphasize the good elements of the Christian life that are ours as followers of Jesus Christ. The program is based on the premise that you know your children best, where they are in their learning and own personal development, and can best judge when they are ready for specific lessons or information. During the first four grades, we provide a series of ideas and recommendations for you to review with your children. These outline basic concepts that help to understand the chaste life. In the later grades, we assist parents with classroom activities to support what you will be teaching at home. For students in high school grades the program is supplemented with a video called, "You Matter," this can be viewed on the diocesan website.

We encourage you to review and use the materials (both for parents and teachers) on the diocesan website. Each year Catechists provide you with the date that they intend to give the lesson to their classes so that you can coordinate your discussion with your children at home. There is also a link listed to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, which provides safety tips to review with your children.

http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/childprotect/child_protection.php

http://www.missingkids.com/missingkids/servlet/PageServlet?LanguageCountry=en_US&PageId=200

The basic point of all this information is that parents need to be involved with their children and the more you know about your children's daily lives the better you are able to spot any danger signs that may surface. The more regular communication with your children the more free they will be to come to you with their concerns. We want children to grow up with a proper, healthy, and holy understanding of themselves, their faith, and the best teacher of all, Jesus Christ.

Respectfully,

Maria Ammirati

Director of Religious Education

Saint Raymond of Peñafort