



INTEGRITY RESTORED™

**Six Things You Can Do Right Now
To Protect Your Kids From Porn**



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Protecting young children from pornography can be a daunting task. The average age a child is first exposed to hard-core Internet pornography is 11. Eighty percent of 15-18 year olds have had multiple exposures to hard-core pornography. The largest single population of Internet pornography users is 12-17 year-olds. And, even if your children don't have access to pornography in your home, unfortunately that doesn't protect them from being exposed to it by a friend.

While it may seem like pornography is everywhere, you should not feel helpless. The good news is that parents are becoming increasingly aware of the dangers that Internet pornography poses to their children. Additionally, there are a number of tools that can help equip you to more effectively protect your children and guide them to develop healthy Internet habits.

1. Resolve your own issues with pornography.

It's a common, but true, saying that you "can't give what you don't have". When it comes to guiding your children to form healthy online habits, the best thing you can do is model this behavior yourself. Kids notice not only what their parents are doing, but also the sincerity with which they speak. If pornography plays any part in your life, now is the time to eradicate it, both for your own well-being and for your children.

You can find additional resources to stop using pornography at integrityrestored.com. Some steps will include putting a filter on your devices, finding support through a group or accountability partner and possibly seeking out counseling to address underlying reasons for your addiction. Throwing off this sort of destructive habit can be an uphill battle, but it can be done and is well worth the effort.

2. Put Filters on all your devices.

You may think that filters aren't necessary for your children. We know that many parents simply say that they can trust their children not to look for pornographic material. But, the sad truth is, that even if your teen or child is not looking for pornography, it is easy to accidentally stumble upon it. By investing in a filter, you are making this sort of first encounter less likely. Just as you wouldn't keep a stack of pornographic magazines sitting around, you should get rid of the ability to access or be assaulted by pornographic images.

We encourage you to look into a filter (such as Covenant Eyes) that you can use on all of your devices. This includes computers, Ipads and Smart Phones. Most filters will allow you to block or allow specific sites as well as have general filters to block all pornographic material. In addition, Covenant Eyes in particular has an accountability feature wherein a designated person can receive reports of attempts to access inappropriate material. Receiving these sorts of reports can keep you aware of what temptations your children may be facing and facilitate the beginning of conversations about this important, yet sensitive, topic.

3. Educate yourself on the dangers of pornography.

To stay motivated to be vigilant, it is essential to understand what is at stake. There are many informative studies about what viewing pornography does to the brain. In addition, with a little research, you'll discover the ways that pornography not only damages the viewer, but also the women, men and children who are "actors" as well as the viewer's current or future spouse. And, of course, a culture that increasingly accepts pornography is becoming more and more desensitized to the damage caused by this industry.

4. Commit yourself to being your children's first educator when it comes to matters of sexuality.

This much is clear: your children will learn about sex in one way or another. This might be in a school program, from an older sibling or from their peers. The information they receive may be sound or it may not be in accord with your Catholic values.

But children were born into a family for a reason. As parents, you are the primary educators of your children and the best place that kids can learn about sex, love and marriage is from their parents. I'm not just speaking of "the talk", but a series of conversations throughout their lives. This may start with beginning to understand that babies come from the love of a mother and father, progress into understanding that sex is an expression of marital love and continue on with discussions at different time about when sexuality is being properly expressed and when it is being distorted—as it is in pornography.

We know it can be awkward to talk about sex with your children. But it doesn't have to be. You have an incredible opportunity to witness to God's design for marriage and family, through your example and your openness to talking with your kids as questions arise.

5. Let your children know they can always talk to you.

This point follows up on the one before. If you have established a relationship of trust and openness on issues relating to sexuality, there is a better chance that your kids will come to you if they have had an accidental encounter with pornography or if they are struggling with viewing it regularly.

Take the time to discuss with your children that they can always tell you if they've viewed this sort of disturbing material. Pornography thrives on secrecy and children who think they can't tell their parents because they'll be ashamed or will get punished, are more likely to continue to view it.

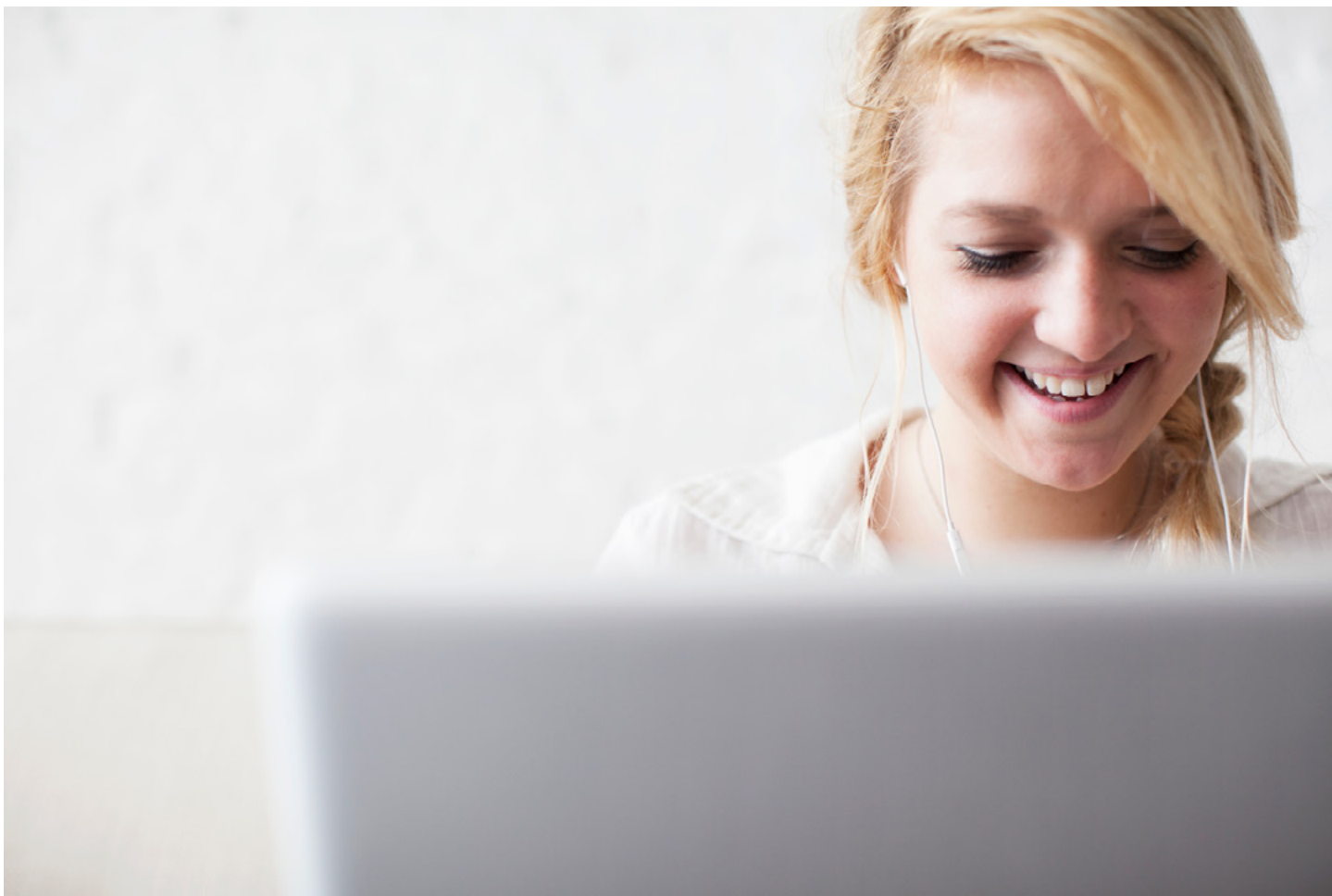


6. Be involved in your children's technology use.

We encourage parents to be aware of when and how their teens and children are using technology. Even beyond filters, it is helpful to have a family culture that encourages healthy online behavior as well as limits it.

There are lots of ways you can go about this, but some ideas include:

- Setting a technology curfew, after which everyone (adults included) retire their devices for the night
- Have a central recharging station in the house where everyone places their smartphones for the evening
- Using computers in shared areas in the house, discouraging too much time in isolation online
- Modeling a healthy balance when it comes to time online.
- Fostering family time that does not center around screens, putting phones away for family dinners, outings etc.



This is certainly just a start to the ways in which you can guide your children to avoid pornography and develop a healthy understanding of sexuality as well as online behavior.

For more resources and information on parenting in a digital age and the dangers of pornography, [visit integrityrestored.com](http://integrityrestored.com).



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Integrity Restored's mission is to help restore the integrity of individuals, spouses, and families who have been affected by pornography and pornography addiction. Integrity Restored provides education, encouragement, and resources to break free from pornography, heal relationships, and to assist parents in preventing and responding to pornography exposure that is so devastating in the lives of our children. Find out more at integrityrestored.com.