

(Approx. 45 minutes)

**Opening Prayer:**

*Read Luke 10: 1- 12; A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke...*

*Glory to you, O Lord. The Gospel of the Lord...Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.*

Let us pray: Loving and gracious God, help us always to remember to think first and stay safe. Your love is before our eyes: we walk guided by your faithfulness. We pray this in Jesus' name...Amen.

In this reading, Jesus was sending his disciples out, in pairs, to far away towns to teach in his name. They were to rely upon the goodness of the townspeople to be cared for and housed. The places they were going could have been dangerous but they trusted God to keep them safe.

We are all made in God's image and that gives us all dignity. We want people to respect our dignity and treat us with love. Not all people will treat us well, but even those who would not, find it more difficult to hurt you face to face. When we use the internet, we usually cannot see the people we talk to or email, so we cannot know if they are dangerous or disrespectful of our dignity. We cannot just blindly trust that they are interested in keeping us safe.

Saint Isidore of Seville was a bishop who became a Doctor of the Church. He believed that an education was the most important thing you could have. He was credited, in his lifetime, for compiling writings that became an encyclopedia of knowledge for all to use, much like a database. For this reason, in 2000, he was declared patron saint of the Internet because it too was a place we could accumulate knowledge.

Sometimes people who want to hurt children or do not respect our dignity will surf the internet to contact children who will trust them. These people will try to lure kids into danger. St. Isidore of Seville can be our 'Saint Hero' and pray for us that we remember to think first and stay safe when we use the internet.

How many of you use the internet? How often do you use it? What do you use it for?

*E-mail; Facebook; Oovoo; play games; do homework and projects; watch videos*

*(Allow for other responses; reinforce good choices, save some not so good ones to use as examples later.)*

What are chat rooms?

Places online to have conversations by typing messages to each other.

What kind of chat rooms are there?

Every kind you can imagine. (Solicit some examples.)

Has anyone visited a chat room? (Show hands.) How often? (Solicit examples.)

What kinds of things do you chat about? (Solicit examples.)

When we chat with people online, do we really know who they are?

*No; since we can't see or hear people online, they can pretend to be anyone they want.  
An adult can pretend to be a kid and vice versa.*

What is e-mail?

Electronic mail you get on your computer.

Who here has sent or received e-mail?

Probably many of you at one time or another.

Remember that God gave us two tools to use to help protect us from those that would hurt us or not respect our dignity. Do you remember what they are?

*Our brain and our instinct.*

Let's see how those tools can work for us in this situation.

Let's say someone you met online and you begin e-mailing each other. All the messages are really funny and interesting and you enjoy reading them. Then, little by little, the other person begins sending you 'dirty' messages, some even X-rated, that make you feel uncomfortable. What should you do?

Stop responding; show your parents; report them to [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com); report them to the police.

Why should you report X-rated emails to the police?

*Some people who want to hurt children, who do not respect your dignity, use X-rated material to lure kids into dangerous situations.*

The police can often track down that person online and protect other people from harm. Trusting your gut-feeling, your instinct will help you online. God gave you that tool to use with your brain to help keep you safe.

Being online is almost totally safe, but there are some rules you should use your brain to remember when you are online to help keep you safe. Since we cannot be sure about the people we meet online, it's smart not to share your "personal information" with anyone online. Does anyone know what you should not share online?

- *Your full name, address or telephone number*
- *Your school name or address*
- *Where you are hanging out*
- *Names of sports teams you play on*
- *Videos or pictures of yourself or family where the place can be identified.*

How could someone who does not respect your dignity or wants to hurt you use that information?

*By calling your home; showing up at your home, school or game; following you to where you like to hang out. (Other possibilities may arise. Refer to some of the questionable*

*choices shared earlier, if any.)*

Why is it a bad idea to go alone to meet in-person someone you met online?

*They may not be who they say they are; they may be dangerous; they may want to hurt you.*

How could it be dangerous to go alone?

*The person or persons could end up being dangerous; they could want to hurt you or do many things even worse that do not respect your dignity.*

Suppose your new “friend” sends you a picture of themselves. Could you trust them then?

*No. You cannot be sure it is really them and you cannot tell how a person is, if they respect your dignity, from a picture.*

Suppose you are convinced this person is who they say they are and you really want to meet them in person. What should you do?

*Get permission from your parents; insist to your friend on meeting in a public place AND bringing your parents; bring your parents or another trusted adult when you go.*

Sometimes kids who are having trouble at home like to talk to people about what’s happening. Criminals online might try to take advantage of an unhappy kid and try to get them to run away or come meet up with them. Why should we never share family problems with our online friends?

*You cannot be sure who they are; they may use this information to try to hurt you.*

If kids are having problems at home, whom should they talk to about them?

*Any trusted adult – a teacher, counselor, doctor, family member, youth minister, priest.*

Most adults are eager to help children with problems; all you need to do is ask.

Most of the people we meet online are perfectly safe, but people who want to hurt you, who do not respect your dignity, will search the internet for unsuspecting children to lure them into danger. God loves us and wants us to be safe. Now, there are even police officers who spend all day online looking for these criminals.

Remember to always use your tools from God; your brain to remember how to be safe online and trust your feelings, your instincts, if someone says something to you that makes you uneasy. God’s tools can help protect us from those who would not respect our dignity. If you feel uneasy about a situation, it’s best to be very careful and ask a trusted adult for help.

*(Discuss the Family Internet Safety Pact and encourage the children to share it with their families)*

Let’s remember how to keep cyberspace a safe experience:

- Never give out “personal information” online.

- Never go alone to meet someone you met online, no matter what!!
- Cut off email from anyone that sends you X-rated pictures or materials or something that makes you uncomfortable and report them to your parents, the police and [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com).
- Agree to and sign the Family Internet Safety Pact.
- Our 'Saint Hero', Saint Isidore of Seville can pray for us to think first and stay safe remembering to use our tools when using the internet.

### **Closing Prayer:**

*Gather the children and affirm each one by saying the following prayer over each one:*

*“(Child’s Name), you are God’s holy creation. God loves you and calls you by name as His child. You are precious and honored in God’s sight.”*

*Then all join hands share with the students the ‘Prayer Before Logging onto the Internet’:*

Almighty and eternal God, who created us in your image and wants us to seek all that is good, true and beautiful, especially in the divine person of your only-begotten Son, Jesus. We ask you, through the intercession of St. Isidore, bishop and Doctor, that you guide our hands and eyes on our internet journeys only to that which is pleasing to you. Help us to treat all of the people we encounter on the internet with charity and patience, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### References:

*Luke 2: 41 - 50; Luke 10: 1 - 12; CCC 2215, 2217;  
Social Doctrine of the Church, Ch. 8, sec. 4, #415, USCCB, 2005.*

# Family Internet Safety

1. I UNDERSTAND there is some danger online. Criminals roam the internet just as they roam the streets.
2. I UNDERSTAND that some people online pretend to be someone they are not. They can misrepresent their age, gender, interests, personality, job or anything else.
3. I UNDERSTAND that some criminals try to befriend kids online, especially those who are lonely or aren't getting along with their parents.
4. I UNDERSTAND that private family matters should not be discussed online. Instead, I should talk about them with a trusted adult.
5. I UNDERSTAND that parents may spot-check my emails and monitor my time online, because they love me and want to keep me safe.
6. I WILL NOT give out my full name online.
7. I WILL NOT give out my home address online.
8. I WILL NOT give out my phone number online.
9. I WILL NOT give out the name or location of the school I attend online.
10. I WILL NOT go alone to meet in-person someone I know only from online.
11. I WILL NOT respond to violent or X-rated email. I will report it to my parents, [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com) and the police.
12. If I really want to meet an online friend in person, I WILL
  - Get permission from my parents
  - Bring a parent or trusted adult with me
  - Meet the person in a public place

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Student's Signature

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Parent's Signature

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Date

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Date