



From the Principal's Desk:

"Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his presence continually" — Chronicles 16:11

As we prepare our hearts and minds for Christ's second coming and the birth of Our Lord at Christmas, we must be ready for the element of penance, which has us disciplining our hearts for the Joy of Christmas and the importance this has to our faith. As Pope Francis shared, *'Advent invites us to a commitment to vigilance, looking beyond ourselves, expanding our mind and heart to open ourselves up to the needs of people, of brothers and sisters, and to the desire for a new world.'* Knowing that many people are entwined in war and terror at the moment, we should take time to pray for these brothers and sisters and hope that peace will soon find its rightful place.

Like no other month in St. Paul's school calendar do we find so many memorable events occurring. All community members are fully invested in this month's events, from our teachers to our parent council to our students. As Pope Francis quotes above, we must look beyond ourselves to help in these unifying events. Many of Lethbridge's families, as well as families of St. Paul, will be in need this season. Whether it's simply the food required to nourish individuals or presents that warm hearts on Christmas morning, our community will continue to do what it can to help.

This month, St. Paul started a few initiatives that would help spread the season's cheer and continue thereafter. The first annual 'Principal for a Day - Food Drive' began November 1st and would be an opportunity where students in all grades could donate a needed food bank item that would be delivered to the Lethbridge Food Bank in exchange for a ballot to possibly win the right to be gifted the title of Principal for the Day. Alongside this, the class who builds the most creative structure with their donations will win a pizza party for their efforts.

The 'Citizen of the Week' initiative also started in mid-November, where students in each age level could be nominated by their peers or teachers for their good deeds throughout the week. Having students pick up forgotten jackets at recess, escorting sick peers to the office, or unselfishly helping set up for events were all examples of students' goodwill and kindness thus far. This initiative will continue for the remainder of the year, and students will be recognized each week on the announcements and on the 'Citizen of the Week' board opposite the library. We hope these kind, caring, and considerate gestures will be contagious and institutionalized within the life of St. Paul.

Some important dates and programs running this month:

- On Friday, December 1st, Elder Andrew Black Plume and esteemed drummers Elijah Provost and Curtis Running Rabbit offered an honorable naming ceremony to Mr. Myndio and Ms. Wilson in the school gym.
- St. Paul's Advent mass will take place on Wednesday, December 6th @ 9:30 am in the gym.
- Christian Action Awards will be gifted to selected students championing Peace Thursday, December 7th @ 11am.
- The Parent Council will be having a meeting/ wrapping event for class gifts on Monday, December 11th @ 6 pm in the school Library.
- St. Paul Book Fair will begin on December 7th and run until December 11th. Please visit the school website for exact times and details.
- Our always amazing Christmas Concert will take place on Tuesday, December 12th, from 6:30 pm till 8 pm! Ms. Packham has all the students ready for an action-packed evening of celebration and cheer!
- The Feast of Guadalupe will take place on Wednesday, December 13th, at lunchtime for all the students and staff.
- On Tuesday, December 20th a Turkey Dinner Luncheon will take place in the gym where all students will attend a 'Tummy Stuffing' event, similar to our holiday family dinners. Graciously, this event is sponsored by the Parent Council and some very generous community donors!

As you can see, many memorable events are taking place this month, and I hope you and your families can find the time to support where you can and help bring our St. Paul community closer together!

God Bless,

Ryan Myndio

Associate Principal's Message

Important Dates:

School PD Day	Dec 4
Advent Mass	Dec 6
Christian Action	Dec 7
Book Fair	Dec 7—12
Camo Day	Dec 8
Choir @ Assumption/Glow	Dec 9
School Council Meeting	Dec 11
Christmas Concert	Dec 12
Our Lady of Guadalupe	Dec 12
Mission Mexico Lunch	Dec 13
Christmas Sock Day	Dec 18
Santa Visit	Dec 19
Wear Red & Green	Dec 19
Turkey Dinner	Dec 19
Wear Christmas Hat	Dec 20
Wear Christmas Sweater	Dec 21
Dress Christmassy	Dec 22
Christmas Break	Dec 23-Jan 7
First Day Back 2024	Jan 8

December is a month filled with the anticipation of holiday joy. This year, with all that is happening in our world, it is more important than ever for us to think about ways of spreading joy and hope. At school, the kids are an ever present reminder of this. They are happy and joyful, kind and compassionate and it is a privilege everyday to learn and spend time with them!

Our faith traditions help us to think about Jesus' humble birth in a manger, and our Advent celebrations provide a wonderful opportunity to think about and reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. We are reminded to keep Christ close to us and to open our eyes and our hearts to the needs of others.

We wish our families a happy and holy Christmas season. May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the Magi, and may you find peace in the coming of the Christ Child on Christmas.

Have a wonderful December!

Tina Delinte
Associate Principal

December Faith Focus:

Advent is a gift to us. The four weeks of Advent help us to prepare to truly celebrate Christmas. Like all celebrations and special events in our Catholic Faith, Advent presents us with a wonderful opportunity to look back on our spiritual journey and think about the things that we can do to strengthen our relationship with God.

Christian Action - Charity

This month we appreciate Joy!



The virtue of charity calls on each of us to speak, think, and act with love towards each other. We have a responsibility to nurture, support, and be in solidarity with those around us. The stewardship of Charity allows us to give to others by sharing our time and talents. Charity brings the world close to home and allows each of us to make a positive difference!

It is not always easy to find joy in the middle of the chaos and challenges that life brings us. We need to often be intentional in our thoughts and our prayers to bring and keep joy in our lives. "May God, the source of hope, fill you with Joy and Peace as you trust in him" Romans 15: 13



Mark your calendars! The Scholastic Book Fair is coming to our school! Your investment in your reader helps our whole school. All purchases earn Scholastic Dollars that can be redeemed for books for our School Library. Families are welcome to shop during the hours listed below. Students who bring money to school will also have a chance to stop by the fair and shop during these hours. We hope to see you there!



Book Fair Parent Hours:

Thursday, December 7: 8:15am—12:00pm

Friday, December 8: 12:30—1:30 pm

Monday, December 11: 8:15am—12:00pm

Tuesday, December 12: 8:15am—12:00pm

St. Paul Christmas Concert!
When: Tuesday, December 12, 2023
Matinee Show—1:00pm
Evening Show—6:30 pm
Where: St. Paul School Gym



PSSSTTT.....

Guess what?!?

Did you hear?!?

St. Paul School Choir has
TWO upcoming performances!

1. Feast of St. Nicholas
December 9 @ Assumption Hall
11:00am
2. Glow Lethbridge
December 9 @ Agri-food Hub &
Trade Centre 5:00pm



Our Lady of Guadalupe

Bishop William has once again proclaimed December 12 is the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, as Mission Mexico Day in our Diocese. The students at St. Paul are welcome to support Bishop William and this wonderful cause by bringing toonies from November 30—December 13. All proceed going to Mission Mexico. Thank you to our wonderful school community for your continued donations.



We love supporting this

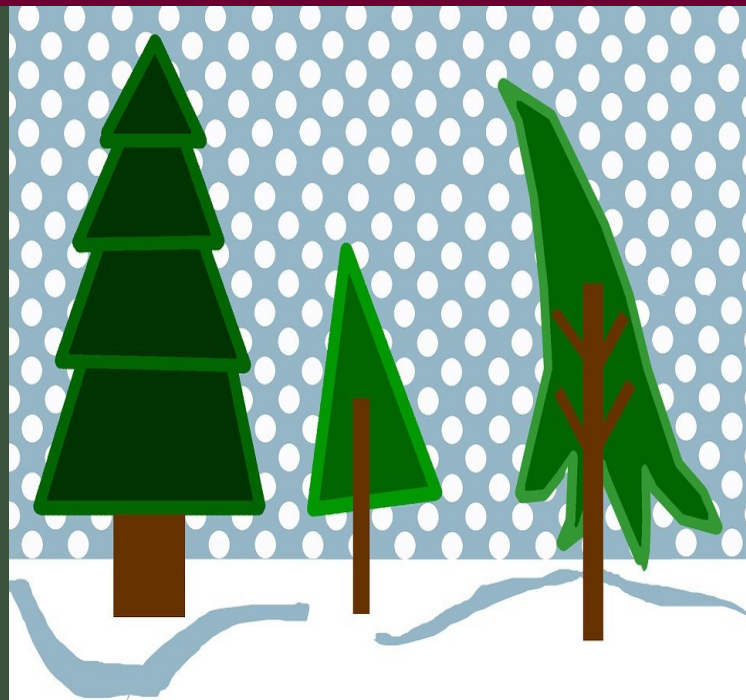
mission every school year!

In celebration of Mission Mexico, ALL students will receive one taco on Wednesday, December 13, provided by the school.

The Cold Weather has Arrived!

Winter has arrived and with it so has the cold weather. Children learn best when they get to exercise, run, and play outside the classroom. Recess gives our students an opportunity to burn off some extra energy and engage in unstructured play. After recess students are refreshed and better prepared for classroom learning. Our cold weather cut off is -20 with the wind chill, anything colder and children will remain inside. Just a few ideas for keeping warm during our winter season:

- Dress in layers
- Toques
- Scarves and earmuffs
- Mittens and Gloves
- Winter boots with warm socks





STAYING CONNECTED

We have many ways for you to stay connected with us. Please check out our school website at www.holyspirit.ab.ca/stpaul

You will notice on our home page it is easy to stay connected with FaceBook or Twitter. Please give it a try!

Board Briefs: Each month Holy Spirit School Division Trustees publish a summary of their meetings. We have added a link on the front of our St. Paul School Home Page to allow parents quick and easy access to the Board Briefs:

www.holyspirit.ab.ca/stpaul

School Council

Our next Council meeting will be on Monday, December 11, 2023 @ 6:30pm.



Christmas Holidays:

The Christmas Break begins on December 23 until January 7, 2024.

Children return to school on Monday, January 8, 2024.





December

St. Margaret of Castello

Feast Day: April 13

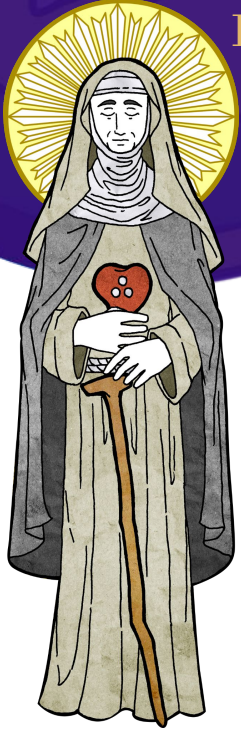
“O God,
who illumined the heart of St. Margaret
with Your light, and welcomed her
into Your fatherly embrace,
we beseech you: be our light
so that we may not be lost in the darkness
of the world, and may reach you
where the light shines eternally:
with Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen!”

St. Margaret of Castello - Pray for us!



December

Build! Pilgrims of Hope



"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you..."

Jeremiah 1:5a

St. Margaret of Castello 1287-1320 (Feast Day: April 13)

Margaret was born in Perugia, Italy in 1287. We know that she was born with a medical condition known as dwarfism, was blind, and had other physical disabilities as well. Her parents, who were nobles, hid her from the public and eventually walled her into a room adjacent to the chapel. It was there that she began her spiritual journey, attending Mass and receiving the sacraments. She became devoutly spiritual during this time of solitude and when she was about 16, her parents took her to a church at Castello, where miracles were said to have happened, seeking for her to be cured. When this did not occur, they abandoned her there.

Consequently, she spent time living amongst the poor of the town before being taken in by a religious family. She joined the Dominican Third Order of Castello, and spent the remainder of her life in prayer, and performing acts of penance and charity to those around her. Her devotion and holiness were so well known in her community that upon her death in 1320, they demanded that she be buried in the local church. She was canonized by Pope Francis in April of 2021, and her incorrupt body still lies in that church in Castello 700 years later.

"Building" In Our Schools

It's important to remember and honour those who have served before us - be it in our community or in service to our country. With the help of Mrs. Alvarez and Mrs. Picton's students, St. Teresa of Calcutta School held a Remembrance Day service, while St. Mary School in Taber hosted a Community Remembrance Day ceremony. On November 9th, a special Mass was held at St. Basil Catholic Education Centre to honour retired staff for their work and support of Catholic Education. *"I thank my God every time I remember you..."* Philippians 1:3

"For we are God's servants, working together..." 1 Corinthians 3:9a



Corporal Works of Mercy

– Advent –

As we enter Advent this month, we would like to highlight a resource and a request.

In Holy Spirit, we have a divisional license for the [FORMED](#) platform. This service provides abundant Catholic content for your use with your staff, students, or your own formation. For [Advent](#), they have two new series, an interactive Advent calendar, as well as some Advent FAQs. *Rooted* will be a daily Advent reflection video series, while *Drawing Closer to God* is a Catholic art show for kids!

You will also know that we are working collaboratively this year with Chalice to support the St. Odilia building project. A number of schools are working on fundraising efforts through Advent to support this initiative, and recall that you can also make individual donations through [SchoolCashOnline](#). If you or a community partner would like to make a larger contribution, please let us know!



"...the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel." (Matthew 1:23)

Pope's Prayer Intentions - For people with disabilities
- Let us pray that people with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusion programmes that value their active participation.

[Home Page](#)

Catholic Social Teaching

– Participation –

Through the course of this year, we will look each month at one of the Catholic Social Teachings. The aim of Catholic Social Teaching is to shine the light of the Gospel on our contemporary world, allowing us as disciples of Christ to look at the world around us with new eyes, and to take action.

Last month, we looked at subsidiarity - the idea that we should seek to address needs at the most local level and create solutions with those around us. Participation is closely linked to subsidiarity. As part of our living together, we also believe that each person is entitled to participate in making decisions that affect their lives, and to actively involve those around us in those processes, whether economic, social, or political. This is a way of balancing the dignity of each person with the pursuit of the common good.

As Pope Benedict XVI noted in *Caritas in Veritate*,

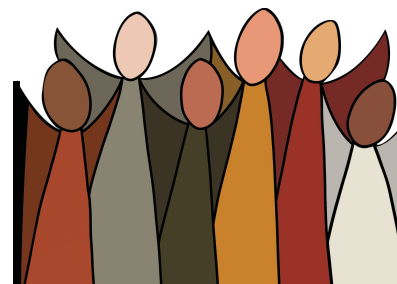
Subsidiarity respects personal dignity by recognizing in the person a subject who is always capable of giving something to others.

The Pope's Prayer Intention this month is for people with disabilities - that they may be at the centre of our societies and that we value their active participation. St. Margaret of Castello shows us the importance of this, and the positive impacts that those with disabilities have on all of us.

Learn more about Participation with one of these resources:

- The Religion Teacher - [Participation](#)
- Caritas EU - [Participation](#)
- USCCB - [Participation](#)

"Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received." (1 Peter 4:10)



Gospel Readings

December 3, 2023

1st Sunday in Advent

Gospel Reading: Mark 13:33-37

“What I say to you I say to all: ‘Watch!’” — Mark 13:37

Whenever something exciting is coming in our lives, we wait for it with great anticipation. If it is a birthday or a holiday, there is a lot to do to prepare for it. We put all our energy into the preparations without hesitation because we know how much fun it will be when the day comes. Today’s scripture reminds us to prepare ourselves with this same excitement and anticipation for Christ’s coming. Since it is the season of Advent, we are preparing to celebrate Christ’s birth. But we are also called to be prepared every day of our lives. Jesus wants us to be ready to meet him any day, any time, anywhere.

An Advent wreath helps us count the four weeks of preparation for Christ’s birth. Does your family have an Advent wreath or another Advent tradition that helps you count the days until Christmas?

Prayer:

Dear Lord, show me how I can best prepare my heart and mind to meet you whenever you come.



December 8, 2023

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Gospel Reading: Luke 1:26-38

“Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” — Luke 1:38

People sometimes mistakenly believe that this feast is about when Mary became pregnant with Jesus. Instead, this feast day is about MARY’s birth. From the very moment when Mary began to grow in the womb of her mother, St. Anne, she was without sin. Mary received this special grace from God so that she could live unselfishly her entire life.

God knew that Mary would accept his plan to bring Jesus into the world as a human baby, so he prepared a perfect soul for her so she would become the Mother of his perfect Son.

Can you pray the Hail Mary? The first part of that prayer comes from the words the angel Gabriel said when he appeared to Mary.

Prayer:

Sweet Mother Mary, please help me to trust and obey God just like you did.

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women
and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour
of our death.
Amen.



Download this month’s [Saint Prayer Card](#) - St. Margaret of Castello



Gospel Readings

December 10, 2023

2nd Sunday in Advent

Gospel Reading: Mark 1:1-8

“...prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.” — Mark 1:3

Preparing is what everyone seems to be doing this time of the year. People are buying presents, writing cards, making cookies, and decorating homes. These ways of preparing to celebrate Jesus' birth are lots of fun. But how are we preparing our hearts? There are many special things we can do during Advent, such as a Jesse Tree which reminds us of Jesus' lineage. We could do Advent meditations as a family to help us think about Christ's coming. We could find a way to serve those in need together. Or we could just pray together as a family in front of our Christmas tree and ask Jesus to help us prepare our hearts for Christmas. Whatever we choose, let us find a special way our family can “prepare the way of the Lord.”

What will we do as a family this Advent to prepare our hearts for Jesus' birth?

Prayer:

Dear Lord, please help us to prepare our hearts in a special way as we prepare to celebrate your birth.



December 17, 2023

3rd Sunday in Advent

Gospel Reading: John 1:6-8, 19-28

“ Rejoice always.” — 1 Thessalonians 5:16

During this time of year, there are many things that can make us feel happy. We enjoy seeing friends and family. We may like looking at Christmas lights that decorate people's homes. The festive food that seems to be present everywhere is extra yummy. But today's scripture calls us to venture beyond “happy” into “rejoicing!” There are so many blessings around us that our joy should be abundant and directed to our God who gives us all good things! Let's share our great joy with those around us, so the light of Christ will shine during this Advent season and continue through the upcoming Christmas season.”

What will we do as a family this Advent to prepare our hearts for Jesus' birth?

Prayer:

Dear Lord, please help us to prepare our hearts in a special way as we prepare to celebrate your birth.



*“I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will never walk in
darkness but will have the light of life.”
(John 8:12b)*

December 24, 2023

4th Sunday in Advent

Gospel Reading: Luke 1:26-38

“Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.” — Luke 1:30

There are times when I do things that I know must disappoint God. There are other times that I've done things that I hope are very pleasing to God. But can you imagine being told directly by an angel that you have found favor with God? That would be amazing! Mary was someone very special to God. He wanted her to carry his Son. She always tried to do everything in her life to please the Lord. During this last day of Advent, ask Mary to pray for us to have the same desire she did, to do everything in our life to make God happy.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, thank you for showing us through Mary such a beautiful example of faith.



December 25, 2023

The Nativity of the Lord

Gospel Reading: John 1:1-18

Today is a day of great rejoicing! Jesus is born! He has come to teach us how to live with love and compassion. He was here when the whole world was created and he is here right now! Let us spend today and the rest of the Christmas season praising him for his goodness to us.

Prayer:

*Dear Jesus, thank you for continuing to love us.
Thank you for being the Word of God that speaks to
us of your love.*

Sources:

[NOVENA TO ST. MARGARET OF CITTÀ DI CASTELLO](#)
[The saint who was abandoned by her own parents](#)
[Meet St Margaret of Castello. the pope's unexpected canonization](#)
[St Margaret of Castello Experience at the NCPD Race for Belonging](#)
[In My Heart: The Life of Saint Margaret of Castello](#)
[Margaret of Castello – the unwanted saint](#)
[2023 Daily Prayers for Families](#)

Division Parishes

“...not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Hebrews 10:25

 <p>Assumption Church Lethbridge</p> <p>Father Kevin Tumback Father Santiago Torres</p> <p>Mass (Saturday): 5:00 pm Mass (Sunday): 9:00 am (Live-streamed) 6:00 pm</p> <p>2405-12th Avenue S. Lethbridge, AB T1K 0P4 Tel: 403-327-8931</p>	 <p>St. Basil's Church Lethbridge</p> <p>Father Kevin Tumback Father Santiago Torres</p> <p>Mass (Saturday): 7:00 pm Mass (Sunday): 7:30 am 11:00 am</p> <p>604 13 Street N. Lethbridge, AB T1H 2S7 Tel: 403-327-8931</p>	 <p>St. Martha's Parish Lethbridge</p> <p>Father William Monis</p> <p>Mass (Saturday): 5:00 pm Mass (Sunday): 9:00 am 11:00 am</p> <p>355 Columbia Blvd. W. Lethbridge, AB T1K 5Y8 Tel: 403-381-8891</p>
 <p>Ss. Peter & Paul Parish Lethbridge</p> <p>Father Gary Sedgwick</p> <p>Mass (Saturday): 8:30 am Mass (Sunday): 10:00 am</p> <p>643 12B Street N. Lethbridge, AB T1H 2L6 Tel: 403-328-4753</p>	 <p>St. Ambrose Parish Coaldale</p> <p>Father Ian Gagne</p> <p>Mass (Sunday): 9:00 am 4:00 pm</p> <p>1523-23rd Avenue Coaldale, AB T1M 1E2 Tel: 403-345-3400</p>	 <p>St. Catherine Parish Picture Butte</p> <p>Father Ian Gagne</p> <p>Mass (Sunday): 11:00 am</p> <p>762 Crescent Avenue Picture Butte, AB T0K 1V8 Tel: 403-732-4433</p>
 <p>St. Augustine Parish Taber</p> <p>Father Philip Van Tinh Le</p> <p>Mass (Saturday): 5:00 pm Mass (Sunday): 9:00 am</p> <p>5009-48th Avenue Taber, AB T1G 1T4 Tel: 403-223-2226</p>	 <p>St. Michael's Parish Bow Island</p> <p>Father Wojciech Jarzecki</p> <p>Mass: 9:00 am</p> <p>1101-1st Street E. Blow Island, AB T0K 0G0 Tel: 403-545-2023</p>	 <p>St. Michael's Parish Pincher Creek</p> <p>Father Myles Gaffney</p> <p>Mass: 10:00 am</p> <p>958 Christie Avenue; Box 339 Pincher Creek, AB T0K 1W0 Tel: 403-627-3071</p>

**Did you miss out on registration in the Fall for Sacraments?
No problem we will be running a Boot Camp for
First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation**

**The First Reconciliation Boot Camp will run:
Sunday, 14 January from 12:00 pm till 3:00 pm OR
Sunday 21 January from 12:00 pm till 3:00 pm
at Assumption Church Hall.
Snacks will be provided.**

**The First Eucharist Boot Camp will run:
Sunday, 4 February from 12:00 pm till 3:00 pm OR
Sunday, 11 February from 12:00 pm till 3:00 pm
at Assumption Church Hall.
Snacks will be provided.**

**The Confirmation Boot Camp will run:
Sunday, 18 February from 12:00 pm till 3:00 pm AND
Sunday, 25 February from 12:00 pm till 3:00 pm
at Assumption Church Hall.
Snacks will be provided.**

**Registration forms available on line at:
www.allsaintslethbridge.org**

**There is no cost for this class and for more information please email Cyndi at
educationallsaints@shaw.ca**

Pre-registration is required

ABILITY SKATE

Ability Skate is a new sensory-friendly public skating program specially designed for our Lethbridge residents with disabilities. Stay healthy & active by bringing your mobility devices, skates & safety gear to this slow-paced time on the ice!

Civic Ice Arena

905 6 Ave S

Sundays

December 3 | 10 | 17

1:30 PM – 2:30 PM

Tuesdays

December 5 | 12 | 19

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Admission | FREE

www.lethbridge.ca/leisure

CITY OF
 **Lethbridge**





Digital well-being and your child

Kids these days are growing up digital. They're using technology (like smart phones, tablets, TVs, computers, and video games) to play, learn and spend time with friends. They're doing things online that many adults did in-person when they were growing up.

As a parent or caregiver, you play an important role in helping your child develop a healthy relationship with the virtual world. This is known as *supporting their digital well-being*. It means helping them enjoy the benefits of technology, while lowering the risks of harm.

Supporting digital well-being isn't about enforcing strict limits on technology use. Instead, it's about building kids' skills to use technology responsibly and safely, and in ways

that promote their overall well-being. Here are some practical things you can do.

Teach digital citizenship

Show your child how to be a good online citizen. Explain why it's important to protect personal information online and model the behaviour you want them to follow. For example:

- Ask your child for their permission before you share photos or videos of them online. Remind them to do the same for other people.
- Involve your child in setting up accounts for apps, games, and streaming services. Help them understand the privacy settings and permissions you're setting up.

Healthy Children

- Talk about what appropriate behaviour looks like and feels like online. Emphasize respect and kindness.

Have open conversations

Talk with your child about what they're doing online. Having open and honest conversations builds trust and boosts the chances your child will come to you if they have an uncomfortable experience or problem. Try these ideas:

- Ask your child for their views on different apps, games, and social networks. Listen to their opinions, even if they're different from your own.
- Join your child in digital experiences. For example, play video games together or try a new app. Watch how your child is engaging with digital media—ask them questions and talk about what you notice.
- Remind your child that you're there for them, always. Encourage them to come to you if they need help handling an online situation.

Try media agreements

Consider making a [family media agreement](#)—it can help to set clear expectations around technology use and online safety. Work together to land on something that's in line with your family values and flexible enough for each person. For younger kids, talk through limits on time and content. For older children, be open to negotiation. Let them take responsibility for shaping and respecting the rules.

Promote meaningful experiences

Try not to dwell on the amount of time your child is spending on devices. Instead, focus on the quality of their online experiences. Help

December 2023 Family Newsletter

them take part in digital activities that are engaging and interactive, instead of passive or solo. Here are some ideas you can do together:

- Video call a long-distance family member
- Watch how-to videos to learn new skills (like crafts, magic tricks, or recipes)
- Use digital tools to set goals and challenges for physical activity
- Try apps to explore interests and hobbies (like history, space, or nature)

Prioritize time offline

Try not to let digital devices interfere with offline activities in your home. Try these tips:

- Go screen-free for most meals and snacks. Shift the focus to family conversations.
- Encourage everyone to put their devices away at least an hour before bedtime, and to keep them out of bedrooms.
- Aim for a few days each week with less time on devices, and more time being physically active. Play outside or go for a nature walk. Try active games, yoga, or dance.
- Put away your own digital devices when your kids are around, especially if they're interacting with you. Give them your full attention—they'll appreciate you for it, and you'll set a great example.

For more information, go to:

- [Digital technology: Tips for parents](#)
- [Media and your child: Making choices](#)
- [MediaSmarts: For parents](#)



Supporting your teen in the digital world

Some days it can seem like your teen is always on a screen—a smart phone, computer, video game, TV, or other digital device. If you wonder about effects on their well-being, you're not alone.

Research confirms that there are benefits to using technology—it can help teens learn, socialize, play, and bond with family. But there can also be negative impacts on physical and mental health (like physical inactivity, isolation, and exposure to harmful content or behaviour).

Interestingly, both zero screen time and excessive screen time can be hard on teens and their families. The better approach is to empower teens to use digital devices responsibly and safely, and in ways that support their overall well-being. Here's what you can do.

Keep lines of communication open

Talk openly with your teen about what they're doing online. This will build trust and boost the chances they'll come to you if they have a problem or an uncomfortable experience. These ideas can help:

- Ask your teen about their views on different apps, games, and social networks. Show them that you're interested in what they're doing on devices. Listen to their opinions, even if they're different from your own.
- Encourage your teen to talk freely about their online experiences, including anything that feels awkward. Remind them that they can come to you any time without fear of being judged or getting in trouble.

Healthy Teens

- Join your teen in digital experiences—play video games together or try a new app. Watch how they engage with digital media. Ask questions and talk about what you notice. This can prompt conversations.

Empower online safety

Together with your teen, stay on top of technology trends. Explore new platforms and learn together about parental controls, privacy settings, and permissions.

Talk about the dangers of sharing personal information or connecting with strangers online. Teach your teen different ways to protect themselves. For example:

- Encourage them to connect online only with people they know in real life. Tell them that if they're going to meet someone they've only met online, you need to know and supervise.
- Remind your teen not to share passwords with anyone other than family. Help them with privacy settings for devices, accounts, and profiles.
- Ask your teen for their permission before you share photos or videos of them online. Encourage them to do the same for others.

Create healthy boundaries

As much as you can, try not to dwell on the amount of time your teen spends on devices. Instead, focus on the quality of their online experiences. Encourage them to take part in digital activities that are engaging, interactive, and educational (instead of passive or solo).

Consider making a [family media agreement](#). It can help set clear expectations around using technology and staying safe online. Work together to land on something that's in line

December 2023 Family Newsletter

with your family values and flexible enough for each person. Be open to negotiation with your teen. Let them take responsibility for shaping and respecting the rules.

Prioritize offline experiences

Try not to let digital devices interfere with offline activities for your family. These tips can help:

- Make device-free zones in your home (like common areas where people hang out).
- Set aside devices for most meals and snacks. Shift the focus to conversations.
- Encourage everyone to put their devices away at least an hour before bedtime, and to keep them out of bedrooms.
- Put away your own technology when your teen is around, especially if they're interacting with you. Give them your full attention—they'll appreciate you for it, and you'll set a great example.

Stay alert to signs of trouble

Be honest with yourself about how your teen is doing with screens. Even small changes in their mood or behaviour can be a sign that something isn't right. If you're concerned, reach out to a health care professional. Or for health advice or information 24/7, call 811.

For more information, go to:

- [How can you help your teen develop healthy cell phone habits?](#)
- [Digital technology: Tips for parents](#)
- [Parenting teens and tweens in the digital world](#)
- [Youth and digital technology](#)

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