Virtual Gatherings: Staying Safe Online
Expect the Unexpected

As our lives have simultaneously become closed off and more connected, protect yourself and your family from having unexpected people and content “crash” your online virtual gatherings and meetings.

**WHO IS THAT?**

Have you considered that people that weren’t invited can still access your meeting?

Know how to adjust the program’s user settings to ensure privacy and control access to strangers:
- Have an identified adult be responsible for monitoring virtual behavior, and remove or block unexpected or disruptive participants
- Create a unique meeting ID that is specific to a time slot so that your meetings can’t be accidentally joined by others that have a previously used meeting ID
- Create a virtual “waiting room” so that you can control who enters the meeting

**WHAT IS THAT?**

Have you considered the possibility that things might be shared that either weren’t intended or are not appropriate?

Be sure you know how to adjust the program’s share capabilities to have control over content:
- Prevent unwanted file sharing
- Turn off screen sharing
- Mute audio
- Encourage children to attend virtual gatherings in an open family space, like at the kitchen table
- Cover the camera on the computer or iPad when not in use
- Prevent recording without permission
- Disable private chat

**WHAT CAN WE DO?**

Be proactive and get to know the user settings of the programs that you or your children are using. What else should we consider?

- Trust your gut – if something just doesn’t seem right or you are not comfortable with the virtual interactions you should speak up
- Check with your child’s school or parish leaders to find out how they will be reaching out and ask about the guidelines that they have put in place
- Communicate your feedback, don’t assume someone else has already spoken up
- If something needs to be stopped immediately, turn off or close the device

If you are using Zoom for work or school, read the blog: “How to Keep Uninvited Guests Out of Your Zoom Event”

https://blog.zoom.us/wordpress/2020/03/20/keep-uninvited-guests-out-of-your-zoom-event/