

A PROGRAM AND SERVICE OF
THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC RISK RETENTION GROUP, INC.

VIRTUS® Online

- [Update My Account](#)
- |
- [Logout](#)

[Español](#)

- [Home](#)
- [About Us](#)
- [Services / Programs](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Reporting Child Abuse](#)
- [Contact Information](#)
- [Help / FAQs](#)

The Benefits and Risks of Social Media Challenges

By Caitlin Bootsma

Like so much on social media, Tik-Tok and other "challenges" can be a mixed bag. Some, like the "Core Memory Challenge", derived from the Disney movie *Inside Out*, focus on sharing special moments with friends and family. There are also positive challenges to raise money for a good cause. Others are fun dance moves that can be a silly, fun way to try something new.

Then there are the challenges that fall firmly in the harmful category. Take, for instance the Sunburn Art Challenge, where participants expose their skin to the sun to be burnt around a certain object (usually a sticker of some shape) to create a design from sunburn. Or, the Ice and Salt Challenge, which encourages kids to put salt on their skin and then an ice cube on top, causing the skin to burn. Both of these challenges intentionally cause physical harm.

Even more serious are challenges like the Choking Challenge. In this challenge, people choke themselves or others briefly to achieve a euphoric state or "high." This high-risk challenge has resulted in death over the years. For example, in March of 2021, a 12-year-old boy attempting that challenge died as a result.

As caring adults or parents, you may decide not to allow kids to participate in social media challenges. If, however, you decide to let them take part, here are a few good general guidelines:

- **Be Attentive** to the newest trends and decide ahead of time which ones kids can participate in.
- **Stay Connected** to your kids on social media, either by following them, sharing their password, or both.
- **Keep Conversation lines open** about what your kids are experiencing online, and about any potentially harmful social media challenges you may encounter. Use these as teachable moments.
- **Have challenges take place while you are present.** Teens may gather for a Tik-tok dance party in the living room or practice their vocal skills in the backyard, but you may decide technology in isolation (like



locked bedrooms) is off limits.

Even before social media, "challenges" have been taking place for decades... Probably longer! Perhaps some of you remember sticking your arms in ice water or similar pre-internet type challenges. The important part is to be aware of what is out there and what is safe for your children to participate in.

This article is the copyrighted property of National Catholic Services, LLC. All rights reserved. To provide constructive feedback, or request permission to redistribute, please communicate with: editor@virtus.org

This article is not part of your continuing training. To access your required bulletins you must log in using the form in the upper left-hand corner of the screen. Then go to the TRAINING tab.

What is Your Opinion?

When do you call on the intercession of Mary?

- All the time, I need as much help as I can get!
- Occasionally, maybe as I'm saying the rosary.
- Only when something really difficult is happening in my life.
- Never. I go directly to the big guy.
- I'm not sure.

Submit Vote!

YOU ARE LOGGED IN

[GO TO MAIN VIRTUS APPLICATION](#)