

Bulletin & Newsletter Announcements

News, Notices and Reflections from the Safe Environment Office

The announcements are provided for use in your bulletins and /or newsletters.

Please insert one per week; it is beneficial to repeat #1, #2 and #3 throughout the calendar year in order to provide regular communication concerning VIRTUS training.

Replace text highlighted in yellow with contact information for your site.

For more information call: Jackie Farrell
Diocesan Safe Environment Program Administrator
(315) 470-1421

or e-mail at jfarrell@syrдио.org

*Thank you for keeping your parishioners and visitors
informed about our commitment to Child & Youth Protection!*

#1

News, Notices and Reflections from the Safe Environment Office

Your Role in the Safe Environment Program

All children have the right to be safe and protected from harm in all environments. The Diocese of Syracuse embraces this right to safety and is dedicated to promoting the protection of children and young people.

We are all called to be protectors of children. Within our diocesan communities, Safe Environment (VIRTUS) training is required for **all** clergy, **all** religious, **all** employees, and **any** volunteer whose ministry brings them into contact with children.

The VIRTUS "Protecting God's Children" (PGC) Adult Awareness Session, is a 3-hour adult awareness training for those over 18 years of age. Attendance at a PGC session is required within sixty (60) days of assumption of duties, employment or volunteer.

To register: Go to the Syracuse Diocese website; www.syrdio.org and click on the VIRTUS On-line registration link to set up your on-line account.

If you have questions concerning registration, please contact your Site Coordinator:

Name
Phone
E-mail

#2

News, Notices and Reflections from the Safe Environment Office

Safe Environment Program Recertification Enters its 2nd Year!

In 2010 we recognize the 7th anniversary of the Safe Environment's Child and Youth Protection Program. We have made much progress together in our efforts to *create* and *maintain* safe environments for our children and youth.

In keeping with our Child & Youth Protection Policy we are rechecking criminal backgrounds on all clergy, all religious, all employees and any volunteer whose ministry brings them into contact with children and youth.

If you originally trained in the VIRTUS "Protecting God's Children" Adult Awareness in 2005, you are required to attend a "Keeping the Promise Alive" (KPA) refresher session this year. These sessions are approximately one and a half hours in length.

Registration: Please go to www.syrdio.org and click on:

- Recertification Training Schedule
- Register according to the instructions per session! (Recertification registration *is not currently available* on-line at VIRTUS.org)

Not sure you're due to recertify? For more information please contact your Site Coordinator:

Name
Phone
E-mail

Thank you for your *continued commitment* to protect all of God's children!

#3

News, Notices and Reflections from the Safe Environment Office **On-line Program Overview**

In a previous bulletin you were introduced to the Safe Environment Program training, “Protecting God’s Children” Adult Awareness. Recall that training is mandated for **all** clergy, **all** religious, **all** employees, and **any** volunteer whose ministry brings them into contact with children.

Perhaps you don’t fall into one of these mandated categories; it is the *preference* of the Safe Environment Office that **all** adults in our diocesan communities participate in awareness training to build and maintain the protective barrier that keeps our children safe. We are a *community* of caring people, concerned adults ~ protectors of children. How can *you* learn more?

The VIRTUS organization has provided a brief program overview (11 minutes). We anticipate that this overview will demonstrate that *you* are a *part of the solution* to child sexual abuse in all environments! After the preview we look forward to your future participation in the three-hour session in order to learn more and to become certified!

You can access the VIRTUS preview by following these steps:

On your computer, go to : www.VIRTUS.org

At the left side of the homepage, click on “Preview the Protecting God’s Children” Program and follow the on-screen instructions to access the preview:

#4

News, Notices and Reflections from the Safe Environment Office
Inspire Others to Participate in Abuse Prevention

You can help create a safer environment for children by inspiring others to participate in your parish, agency or school abuse prevention efforts. This could be as simple as identifying one person who hasn't participated in your parish's awareness sessions or other abuse prevention activities, and offering them information about how they can register for the awareness sessions. Please help them register at: www.syrdio.org

You can help make a difference in the life of a child and make an impact on your community's child abuse prevention efforts!

For more information call: Jackie Farrell
Diocesan Safe Environment Program Administrator
(315) 470-1421

or e-mail at jfarrell@syrdio.org

#5

News, Notices and Reflections from the Safe Environment Office

Do You Know The Ten Basic Elements of the Child & Youth Protection Program?

The Diocesan Child & Youth Policy details Ten Basic Elements or protocols that, as enforced, are a foundation to identifying inappropriate relationships with a child and preventing child sexual abuse:

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1) Training | 6) Respect for Personal Privacy |
| 2) Screening | 7) Separate Accommodations |
| 3) Adequate Leadership | 8) Appropriate Behaviors & Boundaries |
| 4) Open Access | 9) Hazing, secret ceremonies or secret organizations are strictly prohibited. |
| 5) Visibility | 10) Vigilance |

More information on each element is available in the Policy, accessible from the Syracuse Diocese website www.syrdio.org

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#6

News, Notices and Reflections from the Safe Environment Office
Remain Vigilant ~ Always

It is vitally important that we are constantly vigilant—that we always observe the behaviors of those who interact with children. And we must always communicate our concerns to the appropriate parties. Sometimes this means communicating our safety concerns to our children. And sometimes this means communicating our concerns about seemingly inappropriate behavior to those who are in a position to intervene.

Parents must also listen carefully to their children and observe both their children's activities and the behavior of older children and adults who interact with them. When children exhibit dramatic behavioral changes, adults must find out what caused the changes. Being aware of what's happening with our children means talking to, listening to, and observing them—at every opportunity.

For more information call: Jackie Farrell
Diocesan Safe Environment Program Administrator
(315) 470-1421

or e-mail at jfarrell@syrdio.org

Source: www.virtusonline.org

#9

Child and Youth Protection ~ Did You Know?
An Appropriate Way to Report Inappropriate Behavior

How should you communicate your concerns to someone who may be behaving inappropriately with children? The "I" message is a simple way to reframe what you want to say so that the listener hears you speak of your feelings and concerns rather than hearing a complaint against him- or herself. The "I" message, simply diagrammed, says, "I feel [feeling] when [situation] because [reason]." For example, you can say, "I feel anxious when you drive a child home alone after religious education classes, because that could put you or the child in a potentially risky situation." It is a much more constructive approach than saying, "You shouldn't be driving children home alone because it is against the rules and puts them in danger."

For more information on protecting children and youth, please call:

Nuala Collins
Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator
(315) 470-1465

or e-mail at ncollins@syrдио.org

Source: Paul J. Ashton, "CAREfronting vs. Confronting Those Who Behave Inappropriately," featured August 9, 2004, at www.virtusonline.org/virtus.

#10

News, Notices and Reflections from the Safe Environment Office

Where Do Your Kids Spend Their Time?

You can help keep your children safe by knowing where they spend their time. Get to know the adults who show up at the various locations in the community where children gather and where they play together. Be wary of any adult who seems more interested in creating a relationship with a child than with other adults. Pay attention when an adult seems to single out a particular child for a relationship or for special attention. Warning signs include treats, gifts, vacations, or other special favors offered only to one specific child.

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Diocesan Safe Environment Program Administrator
(315) 470-1421

or e-mail at jfarrell@syrдио.org

Source: "Know the Rules . . . After-School Safety Tips for Children Who Are Home Alone,"
www.missingkids.com.

#11

News, Notices and Reflections from the Safe Environment Office
Get Involved in Parish Safety Programs

Parents and guardians play a key role in the success of parish programs for young people because when they stay involved, parents and guardians will be in the best position to protect their own children as well as all the children in the parish community. Involvement and communication are important factors in helping to ensure safe environments for all of our children.

For more information on how you can become actively involved in the safe environment training programs in our parish, contact our Site Coordinator:

Site Coordinator:

Name

Phone

E-mail

#12

Child and Youth Protection ~ Did You Know?
Preventing Child Abuse Is Everyone's Responsibility

It is every adult's moral responsibility to protect possible victims by reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to the responsible authorities. Sexual abuse of minors is a pervasive societal problem, and only concerted and sustained efforts by all adults in every segment of society can help to protect children and youth.

To report a case of sexual abuse within our Diocese, please contact:

Nuala Collins
Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator
(315) 470-1465

All calls are kept confidential in nature. Please do not hesitate to contact her with any questions or concerns that you may have regarding abuse. It is with your help and concern that we are continuing to provide awareness for the safety of our children.

#13

News, Notices and Reflections from the Safe Environment Office
Internet Filter Software Is No Substitute for Parental Monitoring

There is a lot of material on the Internet that is inappropriate for children. Parents can use filtering software to protect children from that material, but filters do not guarantee that children will not be exposed; a filter will never be a substitute for parents' presence. Monitor your child's online behavior. Keep your family computer in a highly visible, common area, like the family room or the kitchen. Ask your children to show you what sites they go to, and be open and willing to discuss the inappropriate material they might come across.

Source: www.netsmartz.org

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#14

Child and Youth Protection ~ Did You Know?

“Tattling” or “Telling” ?

“I don’t want to be the first to say anything.” “It’s none of my business.” “Let’s just pretend it didn’t happen.” “I’m not going to be the one to tattle.”

The distinction between “tattling” and “telling” is a simple one. *Tattling* is done to get someone in trouble. *Telling* is done to stop a person from hurting themselves or someone else. So don’t be the one to “tattle,” but please be the one who “tells,” and save a child’s life.

To report a case of sexual abuse within our Diocese, please contact:

Nuala Collins
Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator
(315) 470-1465

Please do not hesitate to contact her with any questions or concerns that you may have regarding abuse. It is with your help and concern that we are continuing to provide awareness for the safety of our children.

#15

News, Notices and Reflections from the Safe Environment Office

Five Steps to Safer Environments

The Catholic Diocese of Syracuse mandates that **all** clergy, **all** religious, **all** employees, and **any** volunteer whose ministry brings them into contact with children in our parishes and schools and programs must undergo child abuse prevention training through the VIRTUS program. The training details five steps in identifying inappropriate relationships with a child and how to prevent child sexual abuse:

1. Know the warning signs!
2. Control access to children by carefully selecting the adults who work with children and youth.
3. Monitor all programs for the safety of children and youth.
4. Be aware of and sensitive to what is going on in the lives of children.
5. Communicate concerns to the appropriate person in authority.

Source: www.virtusonline.org

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