

**FAQ's**  
**Child Safety Training**  
**Empowering God's Children**

**1. *Why are we doing this?***

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a Charter to Protect Children and Young People in 2002. It requires that all students receive "Child Safety Training", to protect themselves from abusers. To comply with this requirement our parish religious education students will be trained using the Virtus "Empowering God's Children" Program.

**2. *Why now?***

In late 2011, The Diocesan Child Protection office learned that the Public Schools in the majority of the School Districts in our Diocese were no longer providing this sort of training to their students. Because it is required by the Charter, we began classes for Grades 1 and 4 in the Spring of 2012.

**3. *Should we meet with the parents to explain this new lesson?***

It may be helpful to schedule a meeting for the parents of the students to be trained. You may consider showing the 6 minute DVD, discussing the lesson and distributing the necessary forms. Please remember that this is NOT sex education. It is helping the child to understand that they can say NO to behavior that makes them uncomfortable and encourages reporting inappropriate behavior by others.

**4. *Why is this being offered only to grades 1 and 4?***

In order to include this training as part of each parish's Religious Education program we needed to balance our need to provide this training to keep our children safe while at the same time continuing the existing religious education program and sacramental preparations. After consulting with some DRE's and our Office of Catechesis, we decided to start with the lessons in these grades so that eventually all children moving through the parish program will get this important information to help keep them safe.

**5. *May we share the lesson plan with parents?***

If a parent asks, you may.

**6. *Can a parent attend?***

This is not recommended for parents as their presence may inhibit children. However, if your policy/practice is that a parent may sit in at any Religious Education class, you may certainly allow parents to attend the Empowering God's Children Safety class.

**7. *What if no one attends?***

Please complete the Training Record Report anyway with the numbers and send it to the Diocesan Child Protection Office.

**8. *Must we have parents' approval?***

This is not required, nor is there a form for it. We only accept Opt Outs. When distributing the material to parents, be sure to only give a week or two to return the Opt Out form to you.

**9. What do we do with the children who are Opt Outs?**

Please take them to a separate classroom for other instruction.

**10. What do I do with the Opt Out forms returned by parents?**

You must keep them on file with the Training Record Report. The USCCB auditors may ask to see it.

**11. What do I need to send to the Diocesan Office of Child Protection?**

The Empowering God's Children Recording Form must be forwarded to the Office of Child & Youth Protection by June 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

**12. What if a child in the class reports they were abused in some way?**

After they have made the statement, tell them they "are very brave to tell us and you and I will talk again about it after class". The child should be brought to a safe and comfortable location and should be supervised, if there is imminent danger or any question about the safety of the child, dial 9-1-1. Please be sure to advise the Diocesan Office of Child & Youth Protection at 973-777-8818, ext. 257 of the incident.

***Any further questions, please contact the Diocesan Child Protection Office, at 973-777-8818, ext. 221 or 257..***

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