

**Parish Religious Education  
Child Safety Training Instructions  
Empowering God's Children**

Parishes need to follow the steps below in order for their Religious Education program to be in compliance with the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and the Safe Environment Policy of the Diocese.

Each parish will need to:

- Present one lesson of the Virtus Empowering God's Children Safety Program to 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders<sup>1</sup>. The lesson includes a video and simple to follow lesson plans for age appropriate activities and discussions. The lesson takes approximately 45 minutes and must be presented before Easter each school year. You may present the lesson of your choice, either lesson 1 or 2, at each grade level.
- Communicate about the lesson with all 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade parents. This can be done via letter (see "Religious Education Empowering God's Children Overview") or present an onsite meeting/training of the parents.
- Allow Parents to request that their child(ren) not participate in the Empowering God's Children training. See attached Opt Out Form. Send this form to the parents with the Empowering God's Children Overview. The Opt Out form is the only paperwork that needs a parent's signature. To comply with USCCB audit requirements, these forms must be kept on file at the parish with other Child Protection Files.
- Make arrangements for children who are considered "opt outs" to go to another classroom while the Empowering God's Children training is being conducted. Be sure to record the number of students absent!
- Complete the Diocesan Empowering God's Children report form after the lesson has been presented indicating how many students were trained, absent and opted out. The form is retained on file at the parish and a copy must be sent to the Diocesan Child Protection Office so the USCCB audit documents can be completed.
- All materials can be found at <https://chancery.rcdop.org/child-protection>. Lesson plans and video can be found under the Educator tab on Virtus. For access to the tab please contact the CP office.

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<sup>1</sup> Lesson #1 covers "Touching Safety Rules". There are two versions of the same topic that are age appropriate for grades 1 and 4, respectively.

