



# ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PATERSON

OFFICE OF CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION  
777 VALLEY ROAD • CLIFTON • NEW JERSEY 07013  
973-777-8818

## “Empowering God’s Children” Program Overview

The job of ensuring children’s safety is a challenging undertaking. The prevention of child sexual abuse requires more than adult awareness, education and training about the nature and scope of the problem. We must also give our children the tools they need to overcome advances of someone who intends to harm them.

In accepting this responsibility, the parishes of the Diocese of Paterson provide for collaboration among parents, educators and catechists who teach in our parish religious education programs. The Catechists’ role is to assist and complete the work of the parents. Empowering God’s Children is a program we are using in our parish religious education programs that requires parents and other caring adults to help children learn appropriate relationship boundaries and how to protect themselves from violators. Through Empowering God’s Children, we can empower children to respond in the best possible ways when those boundaries have been violated. Empowering God’s Children is **NOT** a sex education program.

### **The Diocese’s Empowering God’s Children Program Synopsis:**

Children in grades 1 will be taught either Lesson #1 or 2 and children in grade 4 will be taught lesson #1 or 2 of the Virtus Empowering God’s Children Program. They are age appropriate versions of the lesson for grades 1 and 4.

Lesson #1 is entitled “Physical Boundaries: Safe & Unsafe Touching Rules”. Students will learn simple rules about what to do and how to react when someone’s touch is confusing, scary, or makes the child or young person feel uncomfortable. Young people start to deal with the real risks they face when they are out in the world and on their own, and they begin to learn where to draw boundary lines in relationships.

Lesson #2 is entitled “Safe Adults-Safe Touches & Special Safe Adults

. Children, young people, and their parents establish basic guidelines for working together to make certain which friends and other adults in their environment can be trusted to act safely and in the best interest of each child or young person.

For more information, please go to [www.virtusonline.org](http://www.virtusonline.org) click on the link for Empowering God’s Children. Any further questions, please feel free to contact Eric Wilsusen at the Diocesan Office of Child Protection at 973-777-8818 ext. 257.