

# Safe Environment

January 2019 Newsletter

Dear Facilitators,

Happy New Year! I can't believe how fast time is passing! As we begin the 2019 year, I would like to extend a heart-felt *thank you* to Sister Kay for the many years of dedicated service to the archdiocese and for her enormous amount of compassion and commitment to the protection of children, youth and vulnerable adults. Please keep her in your prayers as she embarks on the next adventure God has instore for her. She will be greatly missed in this office, but her spirit will always remain. I ask for your prayers in my new role as the Safe Environment Coordinator. I've had the privilege of meeting several of you and I am looking forward to working with you in the new year. I will continue making site visits each month and hope to see many of the parishes/mission and schools before June.

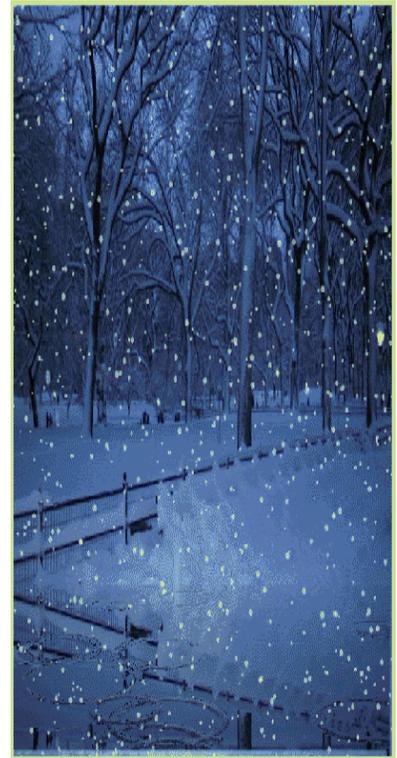
Below is my contact information and office hours.

***Maggie Beckham, Safe Environment Coordinator***

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## SAVE THE DATE

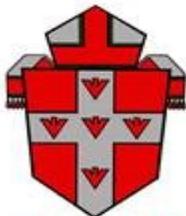
The Annual In-service is set for **Thursday, April 4th** for all Safe Environment Facilitators and other parish staff members with presentation beginning at 9:30am. More information will be sent next month.

## REMINDER

It's time for the **THIRD** publication of **Safe Environment in the Parish Bulletin!**

## WEBPAGE MAKE-OVER

The SE webpage is getting 'tweaked' but is still up and running. The main change is placing documents of the same language together. The other change is the SE calendar. It is my goal to have due dates, events and trainings listed by the end of next week. Send over your training dates and I will post on the calendar! Using this calendar is another way to stay in communication with one another.



*Go Make Disciples*

*"I depend upon every parish/mission in our Archdiocese to strictly adhere to the protocol of our Archdiocesan Safe Environment Program."*

## 2017-2018 ON-SITE AUDIT RESULTS!

Stonebridge Business Partners spent two-days inquiring, observing and reviewing specific requested documentation on December 11th and 12th. The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City was found compliant with the Articles within the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

Safe Environment is an endless task; one that requires diligence and dedication on the entire church. Thank you facilitators and pastors for all you do to ensure the safety and protection of children, youth and vulnerable adults within the parishes and school of the



## PARISH COMPLIANCE SURVEY

**In mid March**, you will receive the yearly *Parish Compliance Survey*. This is the tool used for reporting parish employees and volunteers safe environment trainings, background checks, bulletin announcements, etc. Now is a good time to start gathering your information so you will be ready to complete the report. **EVERY** parish and/or mission in the archdiocese must complete this survey and return to the SE office by **June 1, 2109**.

### Facilitator and Database RE-Training

**WHEN:** April 4, 2019  
**WHERE:** Pastoral Center  
**TIME:** 12:30 p.m. -2:30 p.m. (Immediately after Annual In-service)

This is a great opportunity for new and seasoned facilitators to get updated information regarding policy, procedure, documentation, database updates/entry, forms, surveys and much more! Ask questions, clear up misconceptions and gain useful tools for organizing files, using the database, etc., so reporting is a breeze!

A light sack lunch and drink will be provided or you can bring your own.

**More details next month!!!!**

## ON-SITE AUDIT SURVEY

Every (3) three years in conjunction with the on-site audit, Stonebridge sends each diocese/eparchy a survey asking for facilitators, pastors and those directly involved with safe environment protocol and policy to complete. The results of the survey are sent to the designated entity and the entire compiled survey of all diocese/eparchies are sent to the USCCB. The safe environment office received 68 individuals (results are anonymous) who completed the survey for the archdiocese of Oklahoma City. After reviewing the results I found several answers to questions that need clarification.

- Are policies and procedures relating to safe environment published at the parish and/or school? **YES**
- How often is this information publicized throughout the year? **Minimum of 3-5 times per year (quarterly bulletins)**
- Are clergy and other personnel/volunteers of the church/school required to sign the code of conduct? **YES. Everyone must have a signed copy on file. Clergy's will be on file at the CPC (this includes priests, deacons and seminarians).**
- Is safe environment training provided to children? **Yes. Circle of Grace.**
- How often does the diocese require training to be done for children? **Every year and request for it to be taught as early in the year as possible (before Christmas Break).**
- Does the diocese require background checks to be renewed for paid staff and volunteers? **YES**
- How often? **Every 3 years and the reruns are conducted in October.**
- Does the parish/school maintain a database of all employees and volunteers? **Yes. Every parish/school facilitator maintains a database containing background approval, safe environment workshop dates and site affiliation etc. The CPC maintains all locations in the archdiocese in more detail.**

Look for more questions and answers in February's newsletter.

## Background Billing

**January 31st** quarterly statements for November—January will be generated and mailed the first week in February. Several parishes and schools have an outstanding balance from the previous billing cycle. **PLEASE** check with your accounting department that payments have been made to the SE office before the January 31st statements are generated.

### **How and when do we invoice for background checks?**

Statements are generated quarterly for background checks on new applicants entered during the billing cycle and for anyone who has been requested by the parish/school facilitator to be moved from archives to active.

### **Are background reruns different?**

**Active** volunteers, employees, clergy, deacons and seminarians are required a background recheck every 3-years. Names listed under your parish or school site who falls in this category will be pulled by Austin Computing Company into a recheck queue in mid March prior to the re-run date (first Monday in October). It is the responsibility of the Safe Environment facilitator to **archive** all volunteers who are no longer active at the parish or school prior to this date. If volunteers are not placed in archives prior to the reruns, the site is charged for the background check and payment is due for the amount listed on your statement.

## Talk Today, Safe Tomorrow: *Top 10 Ways to Start Conversations About Pornography*

Talking to kids about the dangers of pornography is important – and really stressful! But if you can get started, the hardest part is behind you. Adapt these ideas and keep talking as your children grow and experience new things. You can do it! Every time you talk, your children are safer.

1. Start with what they already know. You have already been talking about family values, their bodies, and personal safety issues. Build on that to help them be aware of the dangers of pornography in age-appropriate ways.

- “In our home we know to wear our clothes around other people. We take them off only in private or when we need help from someone like mom, dad, or a doctor. Sometimes you might see pictures of people who are not fully dressed. They may not be wearing any clothes at all. When that happens we look away, and tell mom or dad right away. We can help you know what to do and you’ll feel better.”

- “We have talked about good touch and bad touch before. We know that the private areas of our bodies are special. Sometime you might see pictures of people showing these private parts. This is not good. If you see this look away and quickly come tell me.”

2. Teach children what pornography is in age-appropriate ways. Definitions give power. From the simplest explanation to a full definition for older children, giving children the words to describe what they have seen opens the door to them coming to you in the future.

- “You know we have fun together sharing our favorite family pictures. But you should know that sometimes people share very bad or inappropriate pictures or videos that show people without any clothes on. Have you ever seen anything like that?”

- “You might have heard kids at school making jokes about something called pornography. Pornography is media that openly shows or describes nudity or sexuality and is intended to create sexual feelings. It can be online, or in video games, movies, photos, music, magazines, ads, and books. It is a false and harmful way to experience sexuality, so it’s a good idea for us to plan together how to avoid it.”

3. Practice with your family what to do if they see pornography. Just like a fire drill, your children need to have a plan so they can react quickly when they encounter pornography.

- “Let’s make a deal with each other, OK? If you see anything like pornography, get away from it as fast as

you can and tell me right away. Let’s agree to tell each other within 10 minutes if we can.”

- “What could you say to a friend who wanted to show you pornography? Do you have some ideas? Maybe you could turn away and say: I don’t want to see that! That’s disgusting – put it away. You shouldn’t be showing that.”

4. Be upfront about your concerns. Are you worried about talking about pornography? Being honest about your concerns can go a long way to opening up a conversation.

- “It may be awkward to talk about this but it’s better than not talking at all, isn’t it?”

- “I’ve just started learning about this subject, and I know there’s more to learn. I would like to hear what you know about pornography, and then we can learn together to be smart online.”

- “I wish I had done a better job of talking to you about this in the past, but it’s not too late to start now.”

- “I worry that if you hear about pornography, you might want to see what we are talking about. It is natural for kids to be curious and want to learn more about things, but the reason I am talking to you is because pornography is very dangerous, and I want you to be prepared to avoid it anytime, anywhere.”

5. Take opportunities to praise kids for good decisions. Children gain self-control and personal power when they learn to see themselves as good decision makers. Water what you want to grow!

- “I noticed that you changed the channel when that inappropriate ad came on. I’m really impressed that you made that good decision and acted so quickly. I bet you feel pretty good when you take control of what you watch. That will keep you safe from things like pornography.”

6. Build on their desire to be trusted and grown-up. Children look forward to growing up and want to be respected and trusted with important things. Give them credit for how difficult it is to grow up in this time.

- “You are growing up so fast and I think you are ready to talk about a really important thing. I know I can trust you to make good decisions when you understand how important it is to stay away from pornography.”

- “You are such a wonderful kid, and this is a hard world we’re living in. I know you’re trying to keep away from bad stuff online. It’s tough! Are there some rules we could set together that would help keep you safe? I trust you, but I don’t trust people who want to get you trapped. What do you think might really help?”

7. Use examples in the media and news. Our cultural environment is littered with sexualized media, and the news is filled with stories of sexual misconduct. So use them as natural conversation-starters! When you see or hear something, think of it as a learning opportunity and ask your kids what they think. Give them lots of space to talk, even if it means being silent for a few uncomfortable moments. You'll be surprised at how much they open up.

- "Goodness, there's another ad showing a woman who is barely dressed. Why do you think advertisers use scantily-dressed women in their ads? What kind of a reaction are they trying to get from you?"

- "This morning I read a news story about hundreds of students at a school that were sexting and sharing these photos with everyone. Have you heard of anything like that at your school? What do you think about it?"

8. Share a personal experience. Sharing your experiences can be life-changing for your kids. Have you seen images that you wish you hadn't? How did you react? Did you wish later that you had been prepared to know what to do? What have you learned to do better now? It will help them to feel like they can share their own experiences and feelings without shame and judgement when they understand that you have experienced some of the same struggles.

- "Sometimes when I'm on the Internet, I've accidentally seen pictures that make me feel very uncomfortable, but at the same time it is hard to look away. They show naked people and often they are treating each other in disrespectful ways. It's called pornography. Have you ever seen anything like that?"

- "When I was about your age, a friend showed me some pictures of some naked people that were in a magazine. I didn't know what to do. I didn't tell anyone because I was so afraid I'd get in trouble. So I never told anybody. Now I realize that I was just a child and I didn't do anything wrong. Sometimes we see things that are a little shocking. Has anything like that ever happened to you? I hope you know you can always tell me. You won't be in trouble at all."

9. Read current blogs on this issue. The time you spend preventing problems now can save years of tears later. So periodically, spend some time to get

educated to help your children. You can use these topics as conversation starters with your family. See a list of some good websites below.

- "I read something really surprising today. I learned that most parents think they have talked to their children about Internet safety more often than their children say they have. I bet that's true here too! What do you think?"

- "I read an article today that says that viewing pornography can become an addiction just as bad as any drug addiction. Have you ever heard that?"

10. Follow up on these conversations and check in regularly. Once you have done the hard work of starting, keep it going! It will get easier over time and your kids will become more comfortable coming to you when they have challenging experiences.

- "Is there anything like pornography stuck in your mind from a long time ago? Do you want to tell me about it so you can let it go and forget it?"

- "Sometimes kids see pornography accidentally or when friends show them things. Have you seen anything like pornography since the last time we talked? What did you do? What could you do if that happens again?"

Let's raise the first generation to be prepared to reject pornography.

The Coalition to End Sexual Exploitation Prevention Group, a project of The National Center on Sexual Exploitation, includes these organizations who collaborated to share this message.

- National Center on Sexual Exploitation
- Porn Proof Kids
- Educate Empower Kids
- Utah Coalition Against Pornography
- Women for Decency
- White Ribbon Week
- Fight the New Drug
- Enough is Enough
- Purity Works
- National Center on Sexual Exploitation