

# Safe Environment Education



for Parish Communities  
and Personnel

Metropolitan Archeparchy  
of Pittsburgh  
2016 Revised 08/2017

We are here today to fulfill an obligation – to our church, to our students, and to the children and youth of our parishes.

Because we are all involved in the work of the church, we are obligated to participate in a Safe Environment Training program.

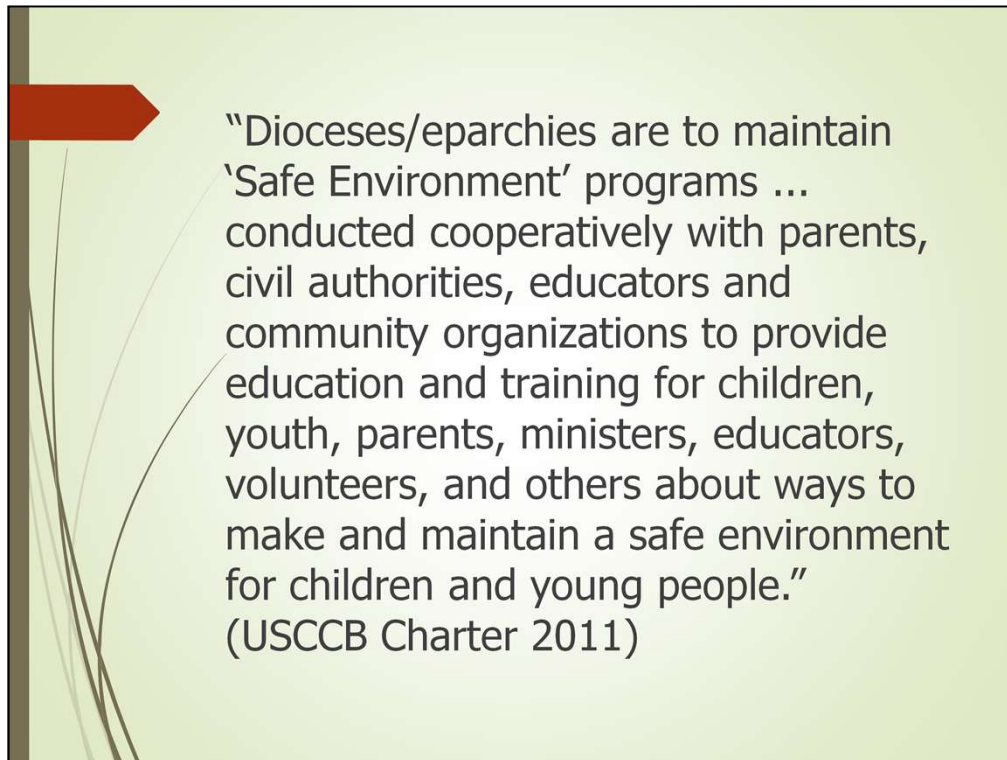


Churches, schools and youth organizations must ensure that children and youth who worship, study or participate in activities sponsored by a parish can do so in the safest and most secure setting possible.

Parents and caretakers have the right to ask these institutions if they meet the requirements of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* before they allow their children to become involved with them.

### **No one has the right to have access to children**

If people wish to volunteer for the church, for example, in a parish or school, they must follow Archieparchial guidelines on background checks, safe environment training, policies and procedures, and codes of conduct. **No one, no matter who they are,** has an automatic right to be around children or young people who are in the care of the church without proper screening and without following the rules.



**An effective safe environment program will have the following components:**

1. A code of conduct for clergy and for any other paid personnel and volunteers in positions of trust who have regular contact with children and young people.
2. Training for all adults who work with children that consists of:
  - Signs an adult may see in a child who is abused
  - Signs an adult may see in a person who abuses children
  - What actions an adult should take when they believe child abuse of any kind may be occurring
3. A training program for children that includes age appropriate materials pertaining to personal safety that conforms to Catholic teachings

Following the disclosure of sexual abuse of children and young people by some clergy and church personnel, the USCCB in 2002 wrote the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. It required each diocese/eparchy to write and follow a policy that will ensure the safety of children and youth.



The *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* is a comprehensive set of procedures established by the USCCB in June 2002 for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy. The *Charter* also includes guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability, and prevention of future acts of abuse.

The document is available to download in PDF format on the USCCB website ([www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)).

### **How is compliance with the *Charter* monitored?**

In June 2003, the Office of Child and Youth Protection began an audit process of all dioceses and eparchies throughout the United States. The audit is used to determine if the diocese is implementing the practices required by the *Charter*.

The Archeparchy of Pittsburgh is audited annually with every third year being an on-site audit.

## Archieparchial Response

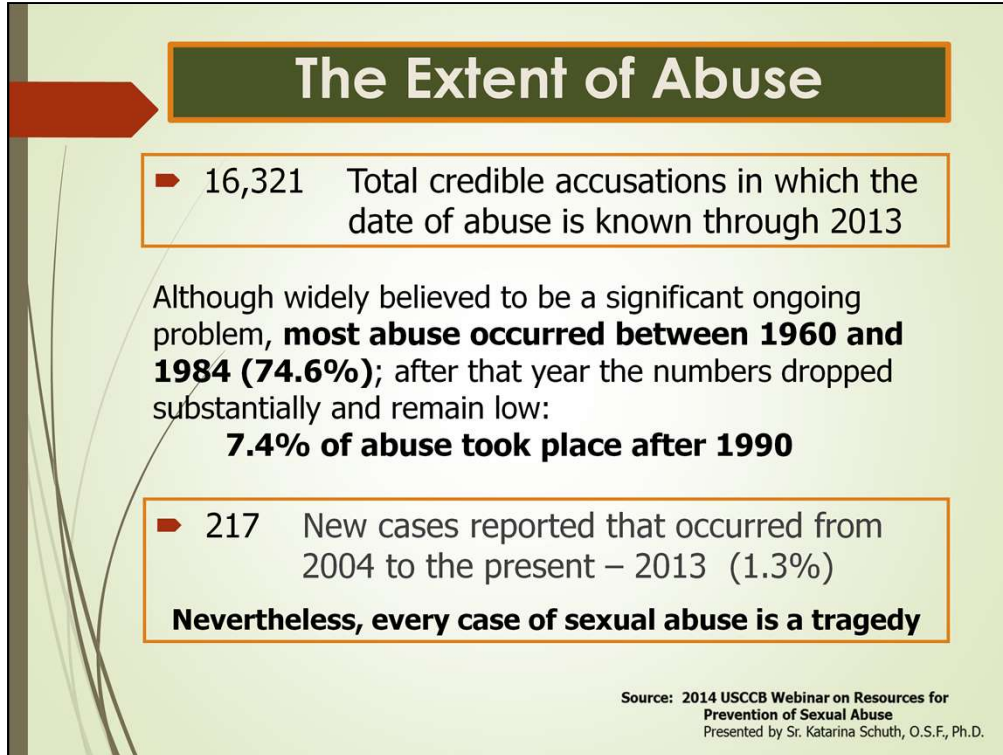
- In **2003** the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh published its Policy on Sexual Misconduct. This policy was most recently revised in **2014** and will be reviewed every three years.
- In **2003** the Archeparchy began conducting criminal and child abuse background checks on church personnel. These clearances are renewed every five years and kept on file at the Chancery.
- The Archeparchy is audited annually to determine its compliance with the Charter. It has been found to be in compliance every year.
- In **2005** and **2013** the Office of Religious Education produced programs which provide faith-based safe environment lessons for children and youth in K-8th grades.
- In **2005** the Archeparchy's Safe Environment Education Training Program was created and updated several times, most recently in **2016**. This training program is mandatory for all clergy, religious, seminarians, employees, staff, catechists and volunteers of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh.

The Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh has ongoing Safe Environment policies and programs:

- Training – mandatory for all and a refresher course must be taken every 5 years
- Background checks – must be renewed every 5 years
- Code of Conduct – must be signed and agreed to by all
- Lesson Plans for ECF classes – required annually, documentation is kept at the chancery
- Annual Audits – The Archeparchy has been in compliance with all requirements every year

The Sexual Misconduct Policy of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh is available on the Archeparchy's website. ([www.archpitt.org/protection-of-children](http://www.archpitt.org/protection-of-children))





## The Extent of Abuse

- 16,321 Total credible accusations in which the date of abuse is known through 2013

Although widely believed to be a significant ongoing problem, **most abuse occurred between 1960 and 1984 (74.6%)**; after that year the numbers dropped substantially and remain low:

**7.4% of abuse took place after 1990**

- 217 New cases reported that occurred from 2004 to the present – 2013 (1.3%)

**Nevertheless, every case of sexual abuse is a tragedy**

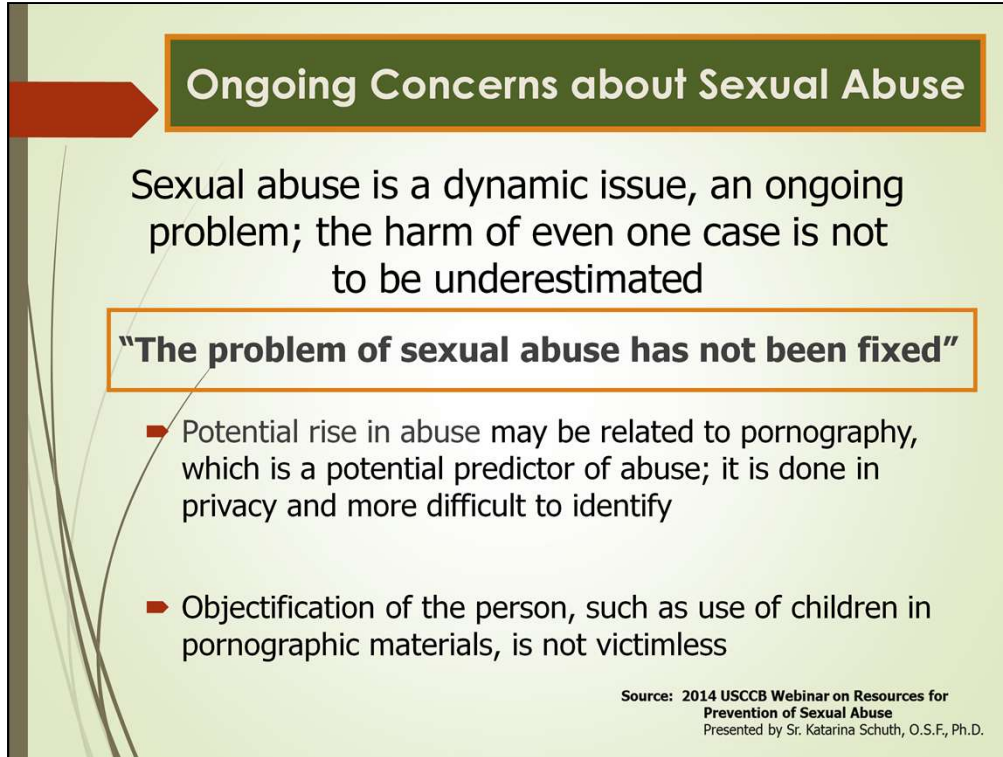
Source: 2014 USCCB Webinar on Resources for Prevention of Sexual Abuse  
Presented by Sr. Katarina Schuth, O.S.F., Ph.D.

### Audits

Faced with the crisis of child sexual abuse by clerics that dramatically came to light in 2002, the church set up an aggressive safe environment program that is the envy of other organizations that work with children. From the annual audits, we can say the Catholic Church in the United States:

- Trained 98% of our two million volunteers, employees, educators, clergy, and candidates in parishes in how to create safe environments and prevent child sexual abuse.
- Prepared more than 4.4 million children to recognize abuse and protect themselves.
- Ran background checks on close to two million volunteers and employees, 51,314 clerics and 6,568 candidates for ordination

Thanks to these efforts, in part, the Church has witnessed significant decreases in allegations and substantiated instances of abuse since the peak of reports in 2002. It is clear that dioceses have made great advances in creating safe environments for children. Each year, the annual audits prove this to be true.



## Ongoing Concerns about Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is a dynamic issue, an ongoing problem; the harm of even one case is not to be underestimated

**"The problem of sexual abuse has not been fixed"**

- Potential rise in abuse may be related to pornography, which is a potential predictor of abuse; it is done in privacy and more difficult to identify
- Objectification of the person, such as use of children in pornographic materials, is not victimless

Source: 2014 USCCB Webinar on Resources for Prevention of Sexual Abuse  
Presented by Sr. Katarina Schuth, O.S.F., Ph.D.

While progress has been made, dioceses must avoid the mindset that takes hold of many organizations that achieve success: complacency. When organizations do well, their success sometimes breeds overconfidence.

This type of attitude is dangerous because it makes organizations believe that nothing unexpected could happen and think that even if it does, they are fully prepared to respond. The issues that have arisen in some dioceses show that this is not true – the unexpected can occur at any time.

### **Child sexual abuse can be prevented**

Awareness that child sexual abuse exists and can exist anywhere is a start. It is then critical to build safety barriers around children and young people to keep them from harm. These barriers come in the form of:

- protective guardians,
- codes of conduct,
- background evaluations,
- policies and procedures, and
- safety training programs.

**Steps in Developing Responses**

**Transparency** requires that the whole church community be engaged at all levels, including laity and clergy, in order to maintain vigilance in the prevention of the abuse of children

Decreased rates of clergy sexual abuse do not mean that less vigilance is acceptable since new forms of abuse, such as internet relationships and pornography, are steadily increasing

**To prevent sexual abuse, don't let the guard down**

Source: 2014 USCCB Webinar on Resources for Prevention of Sexual Abuse  
Presented by Sr. Katarina Schuth, O.S.F., Ph.D.

**Why do I have to be trained? I did not do anything wrong, this is a clergy problem.**

Child sexual abuse is a widespread societal problem, not a Catholic clergy problem. The more people who are trained to recognize the warning signs of an offender, the safer our children are.

In the aftermath of the clergy scandal, the *Charter* requires the Church to train both adults and children to prevent child sexual abuse. This is not because the Church thinks all adults are the problem. It is because the solution to preventing child sexual abuse depends on caring adults knowing what to do.

**How long will our diocese/eparchy need to do safe environment training?**

Dioceses should consider the creation of safe environment programs and preventing child sexual abuse as something we do as part of who we are as the Church.

Dioceses and eparchies have been required to meet Safe Environment expectations since 2003 and should plan on meeting those expectations for the foreseeable future.



## Everyone has a part to play



- We are here today as a parish family to learn how we can help to ensure that our children and youth are happy and safe in their daily activities.
- Everyone needs to be alert to warning signs that abuse may be occurring and to be ready if necessary to speak to a person in authority about it.

Prevention...it's all about the children!

In the years since the first *Charter* was established by the USCCB, there has been much debate about the education of children in abuse prevention and personal safety. The debate looks at whether or not education by the Church contributes significantly to the safety, well-being, and spiritual growth of our children.

Children need to hear consistent messages

- that they are deserving of dignity and respect;
- that God and the Church want them to be safe and involved in right relationships;
- that we want to help them if a relationship isn't right.

Such messages can help children retain their faith in the face of disappointing or even devastating behavior of an adult.

The more adults they encounter who model right relationships, the less likely they are to generalize an experience of abuse.

Communicating to children as Church helps to build safe, stable, nurturing relationships with adults, building children's resiliency in the face of adversity.



## *Let us be attentive.*

**Duty to Live in the Light.** Let no one deceive you with empty arguments, for because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the disobedient. So do not be associated with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness; rather expose them, for it is shameful even to mention the things done by them in secret; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore, it says:

"Awake, O sleeper,  
and arise from the dead,  
and Christ will give you light."

Ephesians 5:6-14

Let us pray.

The graphic is titled "A Faith-Based Perspective" in a dark green box with a white arrow pointing right. Below the title are three text boxes. The first box is green with a black border and contains three lines of text. The second box is orange with a black border and contains three lines of text. The third box is red with a black border and contains three lines of text. The background of the graphic is light green with a dark green border on the left and bottom.

## A Faith-Based Perspective

God created the human person as good and holy  
God loves people and wants them to be safe and feel secure  
Every person has the right and responsibility to care for themselves

Words and touch can be loving or harmful  
God wants people to make loving choices  
Love is experienced in the context of a family and community of faith

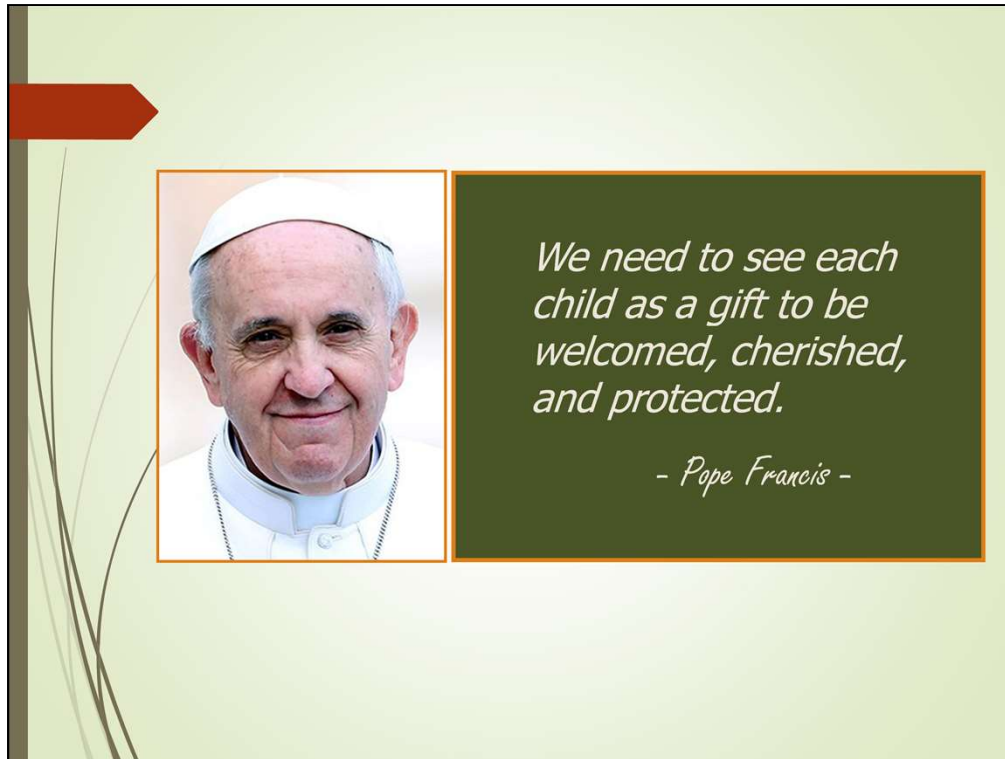
Children can learn to distinguish between persons who provide a genuine sense of safety and those who want to sexually abuse them through trickery  
Children can learn to distinguish between loving and harmful words and touch  
Children can learn how to protect themselves from sexual abuse

We have all been created in the image and likeness of God, as we read in the Book of Genesis.

In striving to make our churches a safe environment for children, we must maintain a positive approach and attitude.

We want our children to learn about loving relationships by witnessing and experiencing them within the church.

Our objective, then, is to do everything we can to provide a loving and safe environment.



In response to studies conducted on behalf of the USCCB, a new initiative -  
*"Building a Culture of Safety"*

will help create a system of mindfulness, and establish even safer environments in parishes and schools.

Mindfulness – is described as the practice of maintaining a nonjudgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis.

How can we, as churches of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, become more mindful of creating a safe environment for children and youth? This is a question we will continue to explore in the coming months and years.

The screenshot shows a presentation slide titled "Defining Child Abuse" in a large, bold, white font on a dark green background. Below the title, there is a navigation bar with a "Glossary" icon and the text "RECOGNIZING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania". The slide is labeled "SECTION 2: Defining Child Abuse". The main content area features the heading "The Three Components of Child Abuse Are:" followed by three colored boxes: an orange box labeled "A Child" with a child icon, a green box labeled "An Act or Failure to Act" with a red circle icon, and a blue box labeled "A Perpetrator" with a person icon. A double-headed arrow connects the three boxes. Below the boxes, the text reads: "There are three primary components of child abuse: a child, an act or failure to act, and a perpetrator." The slide includes navigation buttons for "Back" and "Next", a "Close & Save" button, and a footer with the number "52", the URL "www.pacwrc.pitt.edu", and the "PA Child Welfare Resource Center" logo.

The Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) defines a child as an individual under 18 years of age.

The law considers both an act of harm to a child and the failure to act to prevent harm to a child when defining an act of child abuse.

An Act is something that is done to harm or cause potential harm to a child.

A Failure to Act is something that is not done to prevent harm or potential harm to a child.

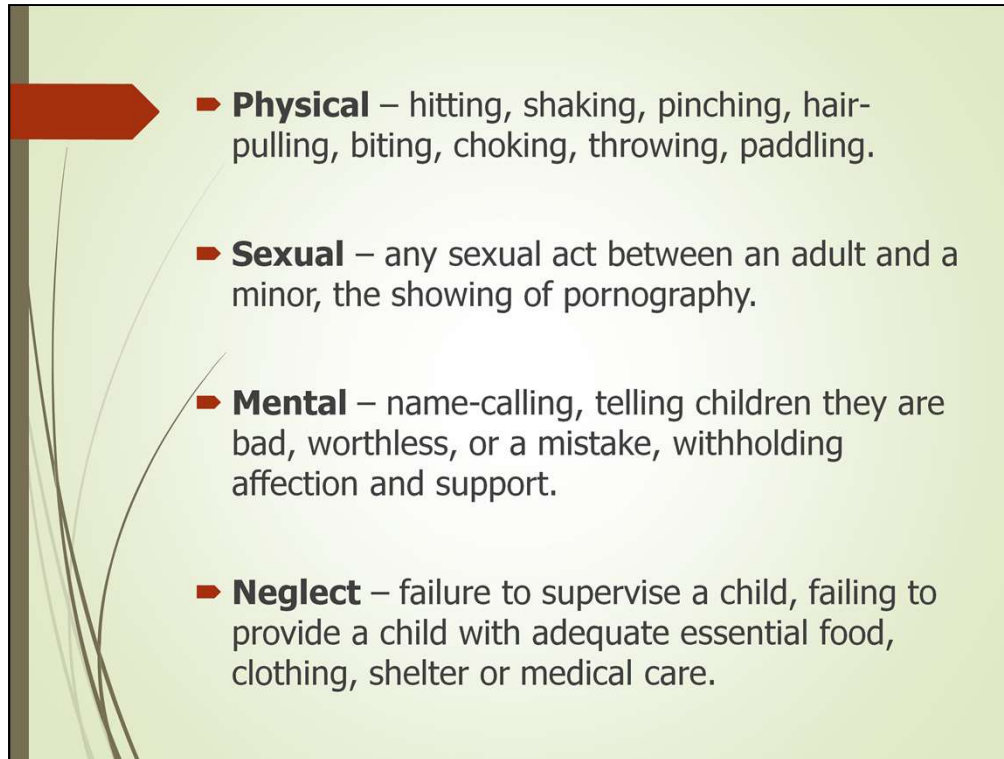
A Perpetrator could be one of many people in the life of a child. We will discuss this in further detail a little later in the presentation.





Child abuse, according to the Child Protective Services Law, means intentionally, knowingly or recklessly doing any of the following through any (recent) act or failure to act:

- Causing bodily injury to a child
- Fabricating, feigning or intentionally exaggerating or inducing a medical symptom or disease which results in a potentially harmful medical evaluation or treatment to the child
- Causing or substantially contributing to serious mental injury to a child
- Causing sexual abuse or exploitation of a child
- Creating a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to a child
- Creating a likelihood of sexual abuse or exploitation of a child
- Causing serious physical neglect of a child
- Causing the death of the child



Child abuse also includes certain acts in which the act itself constitutes abuse without any resulting injury or condition. These recent acts include any of the following:

- Kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing or cutting a child in a manner that endangers the child.
- Unreasonably restraining or confining a child, based on consideration of the method, location or the duration of the restraint or confinement.
- Forcefully shaking a child under one year of age.
- Forcefully slapping or otherwise striking a child under one year of age.
- Interfering with the breathing of a child.
- Causing a child to be present during the operation of a methamphetamine laboratory, provided that the violation is being investigated by law enforcement.
- Leaving a child unsupervised with an individual, other than the child's parent, who the parent knows or reasonably should have known was required to register as a Tier II or III sexual offender or has been determined to be a sexually violent predator or sexually violent delinquent.

"Recent" is defined as an abusive act within two years from the date the report is made to ChildLine. Sexual abuse, serious mental injury, serious physical neglect and deaths have no time limit.

# Child abuse is far reaching

No geographic, ethnic, or  
economic setting is free  
of child abuse  
and neglect.



As a Church we have the opportunity to be the face of God in a relationship that models the Gospel message of Christ. Communicating to children as Church helps to build safe, stable, nurturing relationships with adults, building children's resiliency in the face of adversity.



## What does research teach us about abusers?

- Can be any person who has care, custody, or control of a child — parent, teacher, coach, babysitter, child care staff, relative, bus driver, parent's boy/girlfriend
- Child molesters look for jobs or volunteer opportunities that give them access to children
- 80% of the time the molester is an adult known to the child and is not a stranger

We need to educate ourselves about child abuse, child abusers and potential child abusers.

For instance, a scenario was proposed:

**I get the 'creeps' from one of the volunteers at Church. He always has his hands on kids in one way or another. What should I do?**

Listen to your 'gut.' Offenders give warning signs that knowledgeable adults can use; your 'gut' often picks them up. You are not accusing someone of abuse, you are communicating your concern about inappropriate behavior. Let the diocesan/eparchial victim assistance or safe environment coordinator know of your concerns. Let the supervisor of the program know of them as well. Keep reporting your concerns until someone hears you. Your courage to report those types of incidents may be very helpful. Reporting can let the person know their behavior is unacceptable, and it lets them know they are being watched. If it is poor judgment, this gives the person the opportunity to change the behavior.



## Potential abusers often give warning signs

- Prefer the company of children and young people to adults.
- They allow children to engage in activities that their parents would not allow
- They sympathize with a child against legitimate family rules and discipline
- Hang out with youth in youth-oriented places: coffee shops, malls, etc.
- Find ways to spend time alone with a child or youth, especially overnight

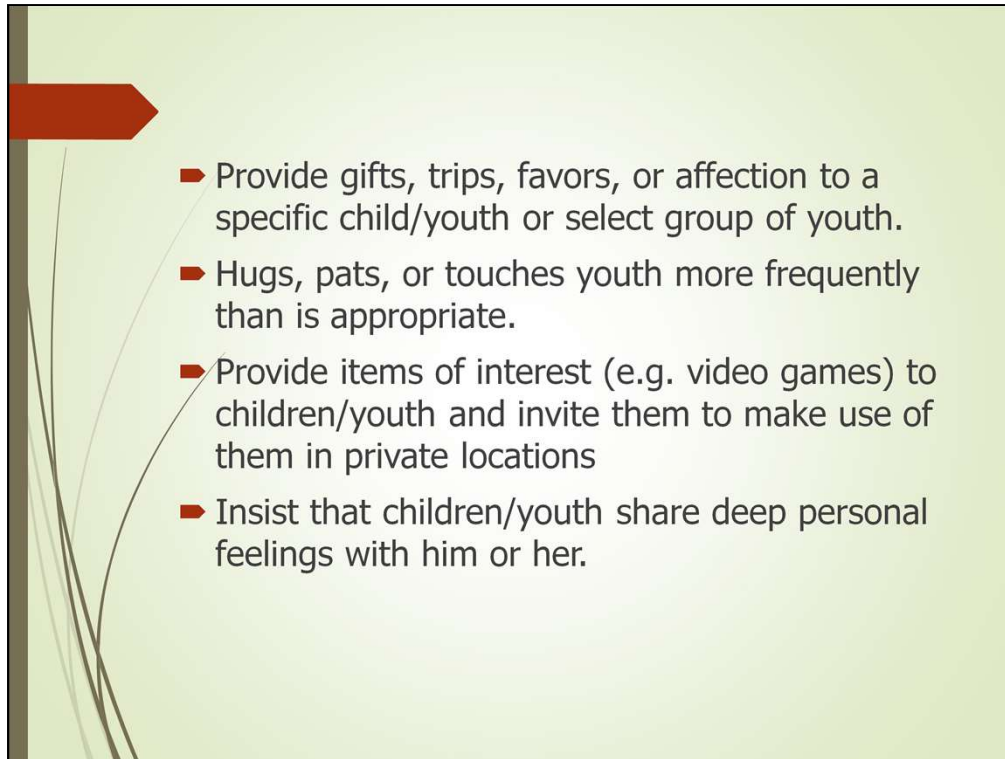
### Key tactics of perpetrators:

**A. The Code of Silence:** secrets of abuse are maintained to protect the relationship; a sacred trust; a bond maintained by guilt, fear, or remorse

**B. Grooming: usually about a 2-8 week process to win a child (and/or family's trust);** introduction of playful touch and understanding the victim's hurts (the less resistance, the greater physical progression of physical intimacy)

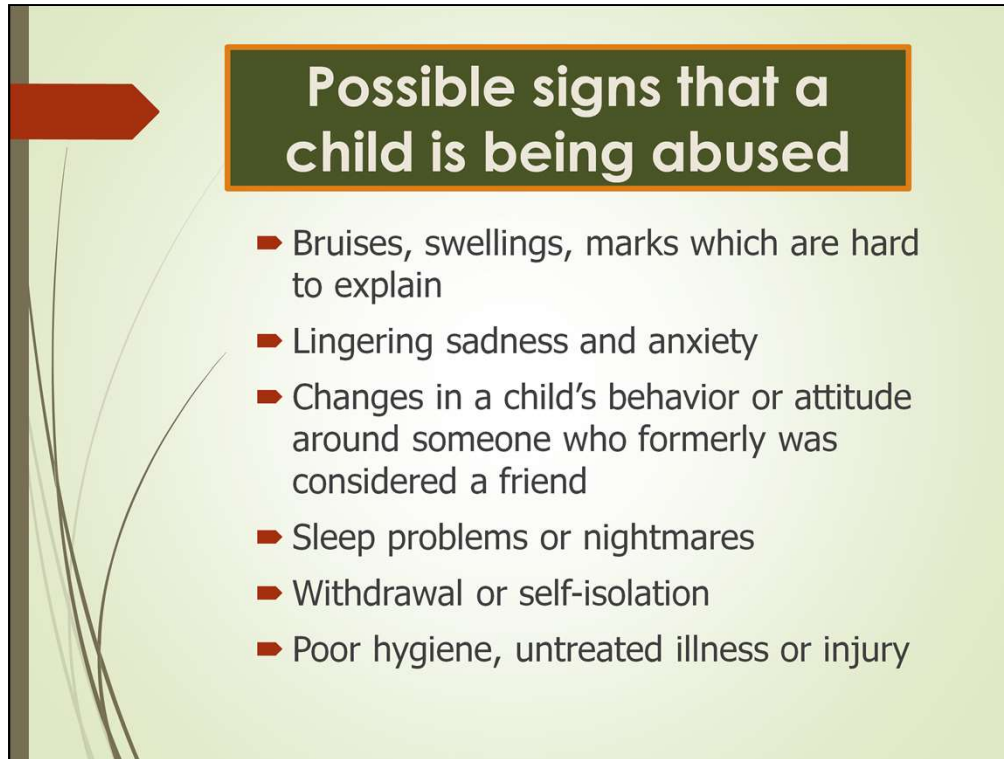
1. giving approval to a child to things you as a parent would not approve
2. sympathizing with the child's hurts as wrongful actions by parents
3. giving gifts and singling the child out as special
4. engaging in an inordinate amount of hugs and touching
5. paying special attention to the interests of a child
6. seeking to spend time alone with the child





#### The Nine Grooming Tactics

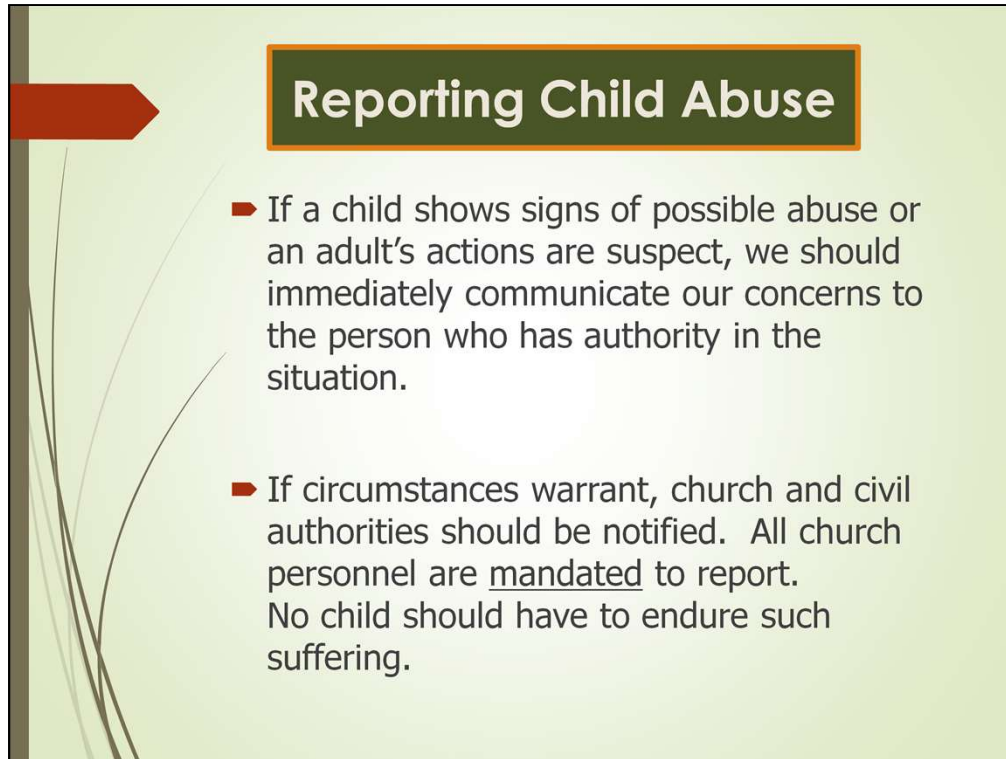
1. Flattery
2. Bribery
3. Status
4. Jealousy and Possessiveness
5. Insecurity
6. Accusations
7. Intimidation
8. Anger
9. Control



Often there are barriers to keep children from disclosing abuse. The child victim likely has been held to secrecy by the perpetrator. Children may fear the consequences of reporting – fearful that they will be in trouble or that the perpetrator (whom they may care greatly about) may be in trouble, that their family will be devastated, that they will not be believed, that they will be rejected.

Silence or failure to communicate about abuse gives the message that abuse is something that is not to be spoken about. One achievement attained in communicating to children as Church is breaking that silence. **Children need to hear from the Church that we want them to report abuse even if the perpetrator is one of our own.**

They need to hear that we, as Church, want them to be respected and protected, and that we will take actions to keep them safe. If we can support children in reporting warning signs or indicators that a relationship isn't right, we have the opportunity to monitor, problem solve, and address concerns before an abusive relationship progresses to the point of physical harm or significant emotional injury.



The State defines:

**Mandated Reporters** are required by law to report suspected child abuse

**Permissive Reporters** are strongly encouraged to report suspected child abuse

In the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh – we are all mandated reporters.

**Must I report suspected abuse if I learn of the abuse from someone other than the child who was allegedly abused?** Yes. Nothing requires the mandated reporter have direct contact with the child in order to make a report.



**If you have taken the PA online course *Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse*** you will have learned that mandated reporters are required to immediately call the Child Abuse Hotline when they suspect child abuse. Some of the examples cited in the training seem rather harsh when viewed through the eyes of the church. Should we immediately assume the worst? Do we take a chance? Should we talk about it with Father first? Sometimes we must make informed decisions based on our knowledge of our parishes, our parishioners and our children.

**Am I protected from civil and criminal liability if I make a report of suspected child abuse?** Yes, persons making a report of suspected child abuse are immune from civil and criminal liability as long as the report was made in good faith.

**If I make a report is my identity protected?** The identity of the person making the report is kept confidential with the exception of being released to law enforcement officials or the district attorney's office.

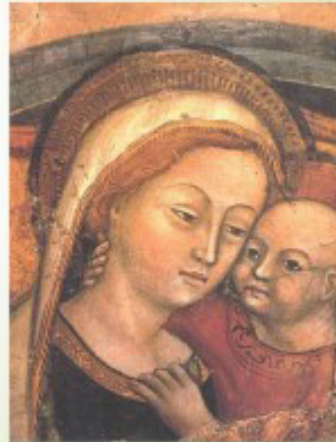
This website, [KeepKidsSafe.pa.gov](http://KeepKidsSafe.pa.gov), is designed to serve as the hub for information related to critical components impacting child protection including a link for mandated reporters to make reports of suspected child abuse electronically, training on child abuse recognition and reporting, information related to clearances and general information related to child protection.

Other States – refer to your state's online website ([Jfs.Ohio.gov](http://Jfs.Ohio.gov); [Dhhr.WV.gov](http://Dhhr.WV.gov))

## **Courtney Miner**

the Victims Assistance Coordinator  
for the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh,  
is prepared to give compassionate  
advice and necessary  
information to persons  
who have been abused.

She may be reached at  
**724-504-9588**

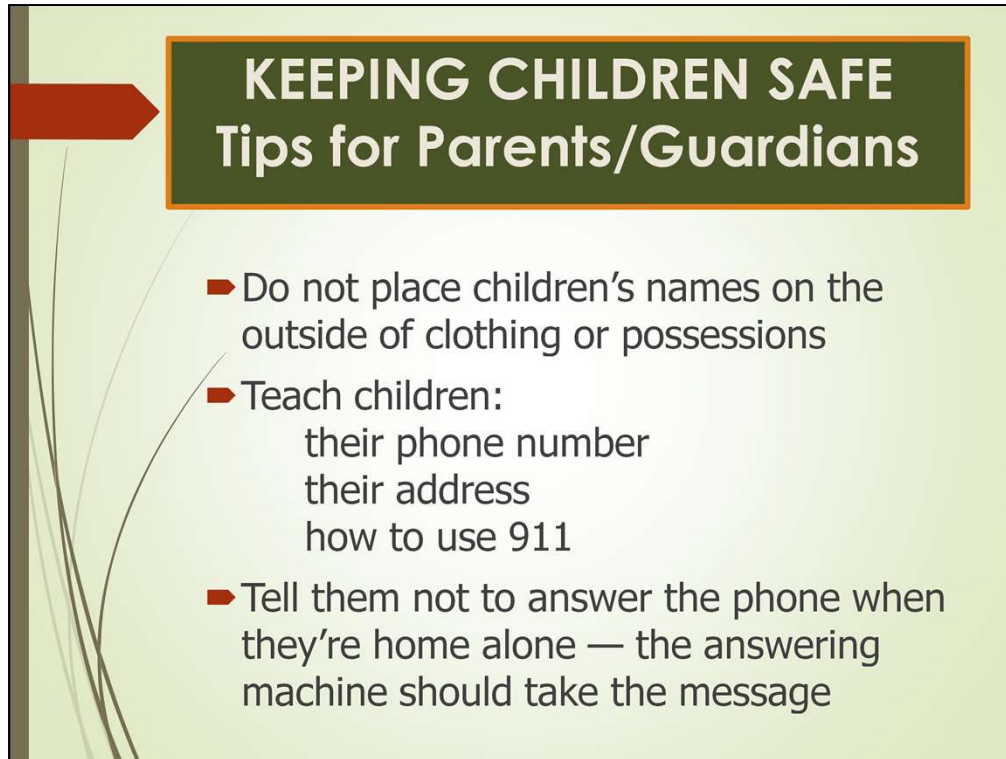


If you have been the victim of sexual abuse by a priest, deacon, or individual representing the Catholic Church in a diocese or eparchy in the United States, there are several things you can do.

1. You may contact the appropriate law enforcement agency to determine if the incident falls within the statute of limitations in the jurisdiction in which the offense occurred.
2. You may contact local child protection agencies, a private attorney, or a support group.
3. It is particularly important, for help, healing, and response from the diocese/eparchy that you contact the appropriate victim assistance coordinator.

The Victims Assistance Coordinator is available to assist you in making a formal complaint of abuse to the diocese/eparchy, in arranging a personal meeting with the bishop or his representative, and for obtaining support for your specific needs.



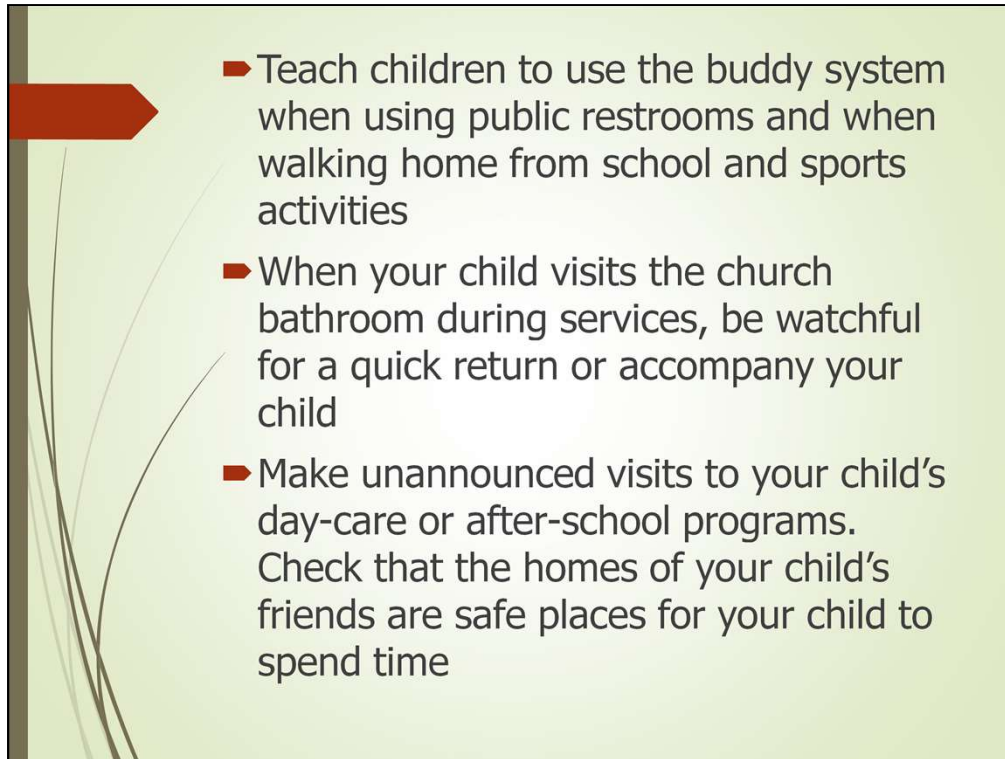


There are many safety issues we teach children and young people:

bike safety,  
water safety,  
fire prevention,  
driver's training, etc.

Keeping children unaware of the dangers around them does not keep them safe.

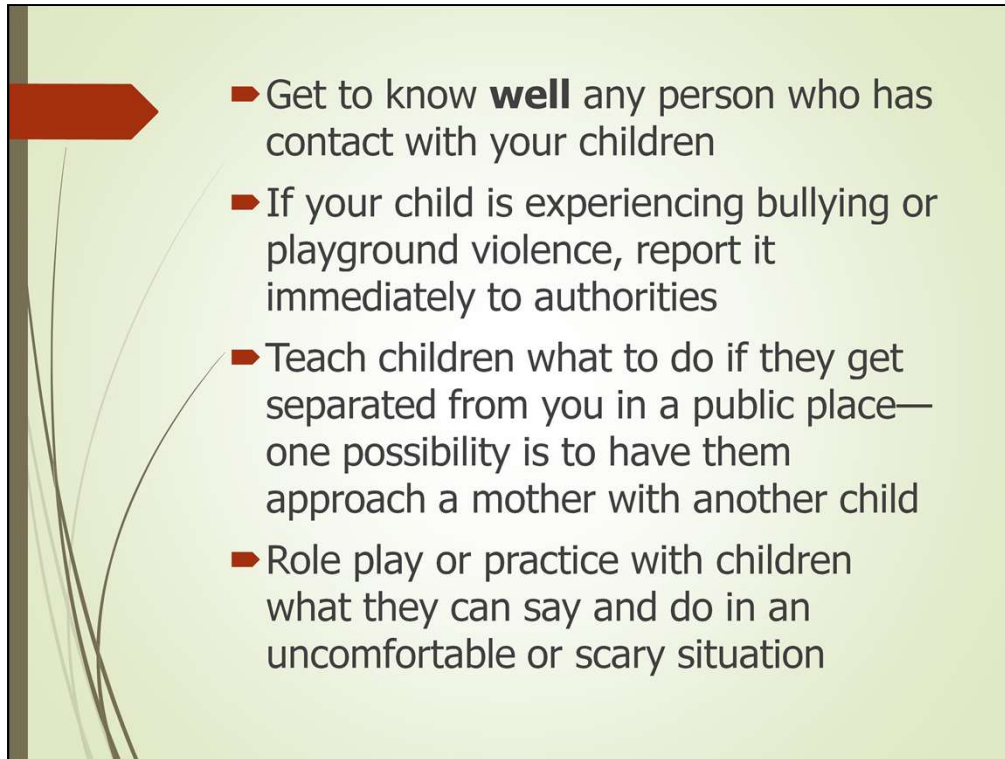
Predators count on children not knowing what to do.



**Teach children that boundaries exist.**

Learning about personal boundaries can protect children and their knowing boundaries reinforces the teaching to listen to ones instincts.

Children who listen to the voice that says "This doesn't feel right" can protect themselves.



**My children are too young to hear this. Aren't you destroying the 'innocent period' of their development?**

Teaching children about boundaries and safe touches is not sex education.

**Again...**

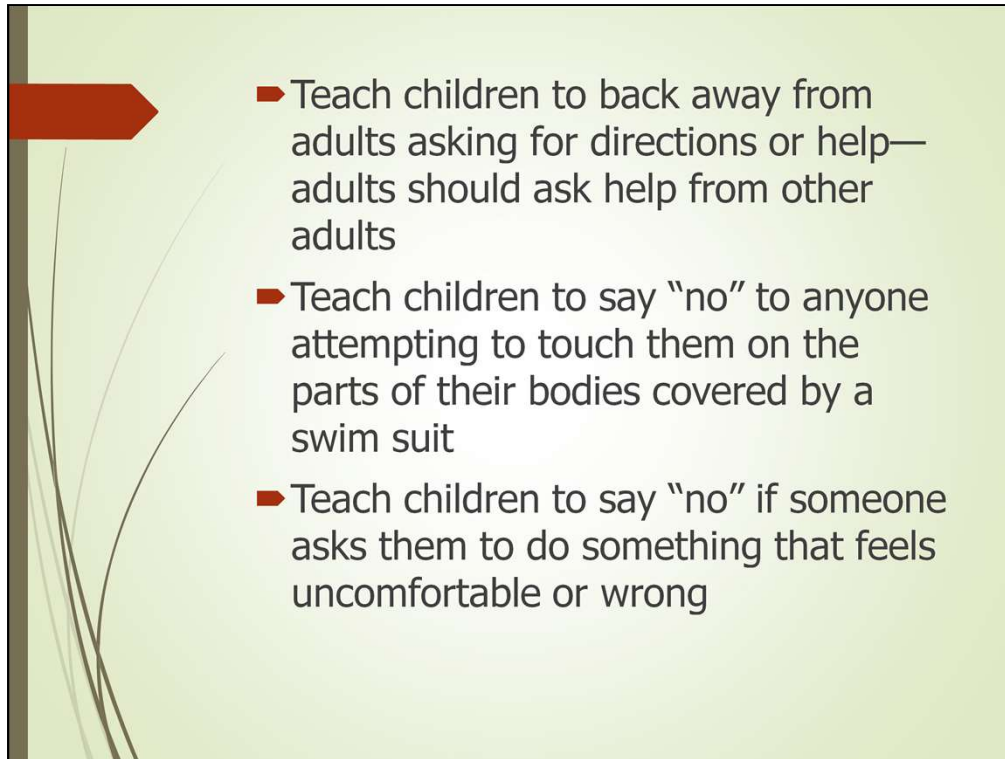
Keeping children unaware of the dangers around them does not keep them safe. Predators count on children not knowing what to do.

**Children can stand up for themselves.**

Children need to be respectful and obey, yet at the same time need to know there are times when it is okay to say "no" to an adult.

Children learn when it is appropriate for them to say, "No, stop doing that."

For example, they hear they can say no to someone who makes them uncomfortable, shows them pornography, or offers them alcohol.



**There are ways to explain inappropriate behavior.**

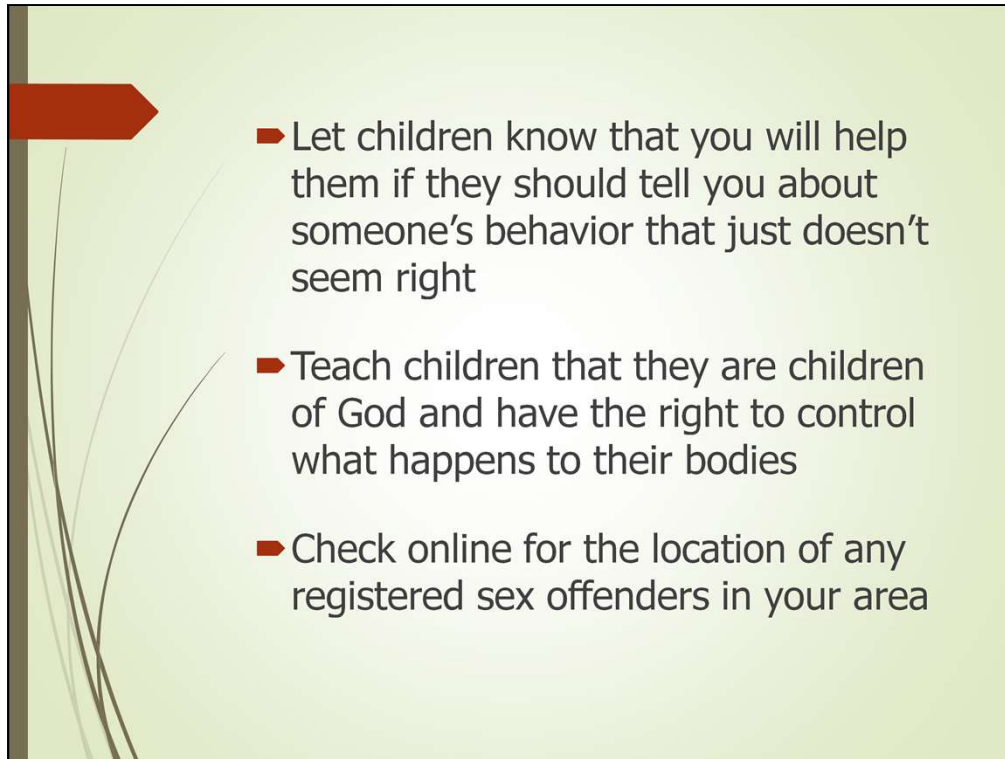
Children learn how to describe what’s happening when someone is doing something that just seems a little weird even though it may not seem wrong.

When a child can learn to articulate what has happened to them, and easily confide in a parent or other trust adult – this can prevent a potentially dangerous situation.

**This is ultimately the goal of safe environment education.**

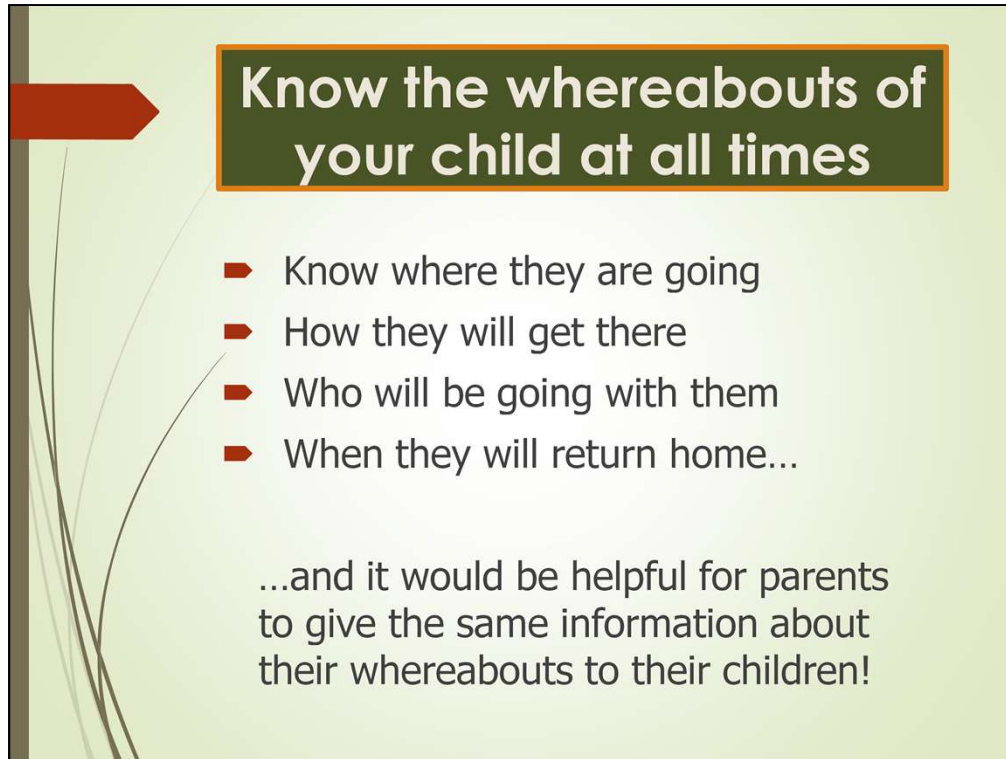
Parents – you can best figure out the wording to make your child understand.

Help them to recognize that “weird” or “creepy” or “icky” feeling. Help them to trust their own instincts, even though it may not seem “wrong.”



Personal safety programs should have age appropriate lessons that give children the skills they need to protect themselves without frightening them.





## Know the whereabouts of your child at all times

- Know where they are going
- How they will get there
- Who will be going with them
- When they will return home...

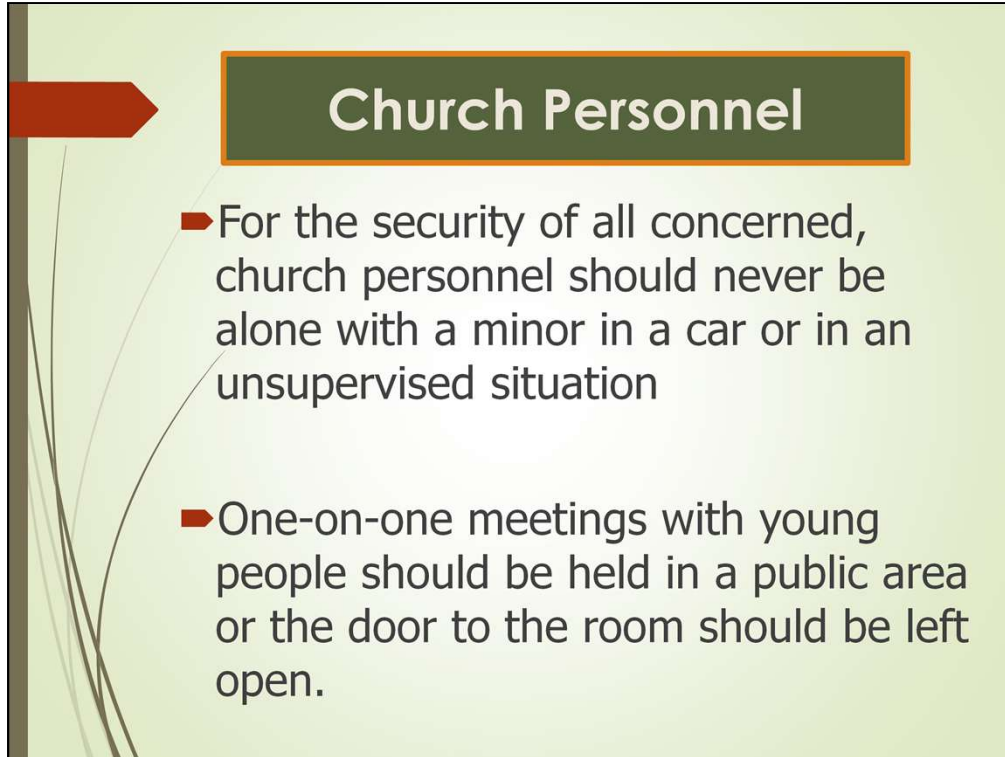
...and it would be helpful for parents to give the same information about their whereabouts to their children!

Get to know the families of your child's friends. Are you comfortable having your child spend time in their home? Are they good role models for your child?

If you are uncomfortable with the lifestyle of a friend's home, insist that all play dates take place in your home. Make your home a good role model for another child, instead of refusing friendship with the child.

Children should always know how to get in touch with their parents and where they are if something goes wrong.

Teens should always feel comfortable calling on their parents if they find themselves in an unsafe situation. Open communication is a valuable asset.

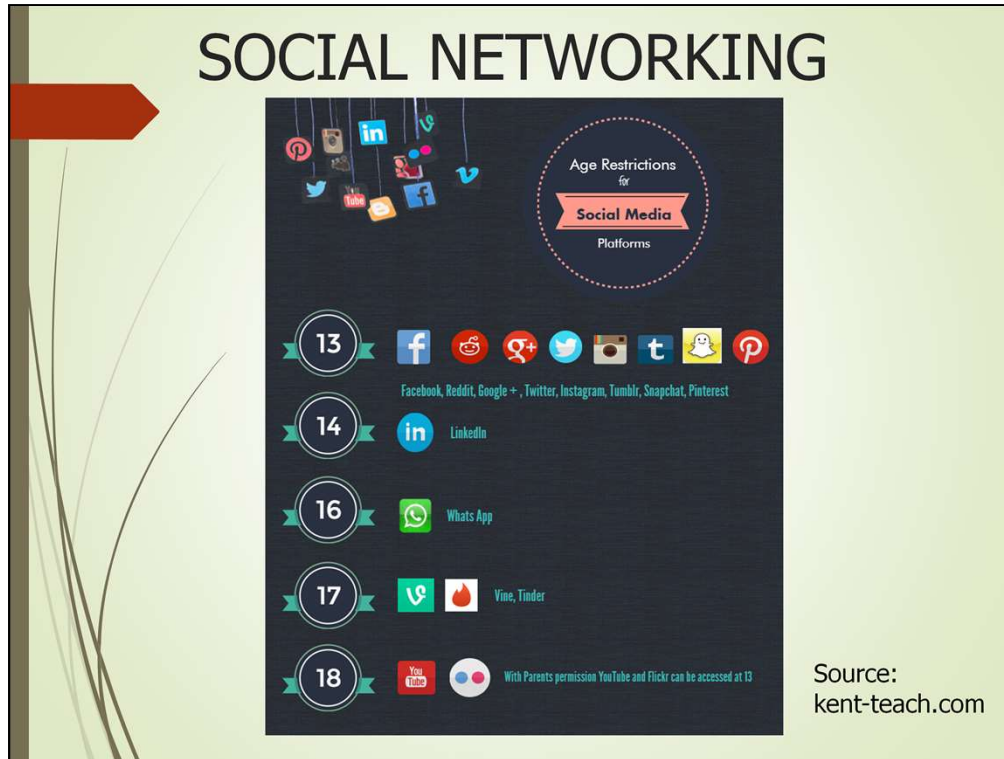


## Church Personnel

- For the security of all concerned, church personnel should never be alone with a minor in a car or in an unsupervised situation
- One-on-one meetings with young people should be held in a public area or the door to the room should be left open.

**Common sense is not all that common** It is naive to presume that people automatically know boundaries so organizations and families have to spell them out. For example, no youth minister, cleric or other adult leader should be alone with the child.

ECF Teachers – when you have only one student, either leave the classroom door open, invite the parent to join you for class, or combine your class with another for that day.



The best safeguard against online dangers is being informed.

Jump in and learn the basics of the Internet—read articles, take a class, and talk to other parents.

You don't have to be an expert to have a handle on your child's online world.

Learn the age restrictions for Social Media and various websites.

They were created for your child's safety and should be followed.




## Social Media Age Restrictions DO Matter

- Approximately 59% of children have used a social network by the time they are 10
- Facebook has the most users under age 13 (52% of 8-16 year olds admit they ignore the age restriction)
- Kids under 13 are flocking to Instagram to post and share photos
- As a society we have largely given up, giving age restrictions a collective shrug and "*so what?*"

Source: [huffingtonpost.com](http://huffingtonpost.com)

### **"Chat" with your kids**

Develop an open dialogue so that you can talk with your kids about the benefits and dangers of the Internet. Cultivate an interest in their online activities—their favorite Web sites, online games, and interests. And don't be afraid to ask your children who they are talking to online and what they are talking about.



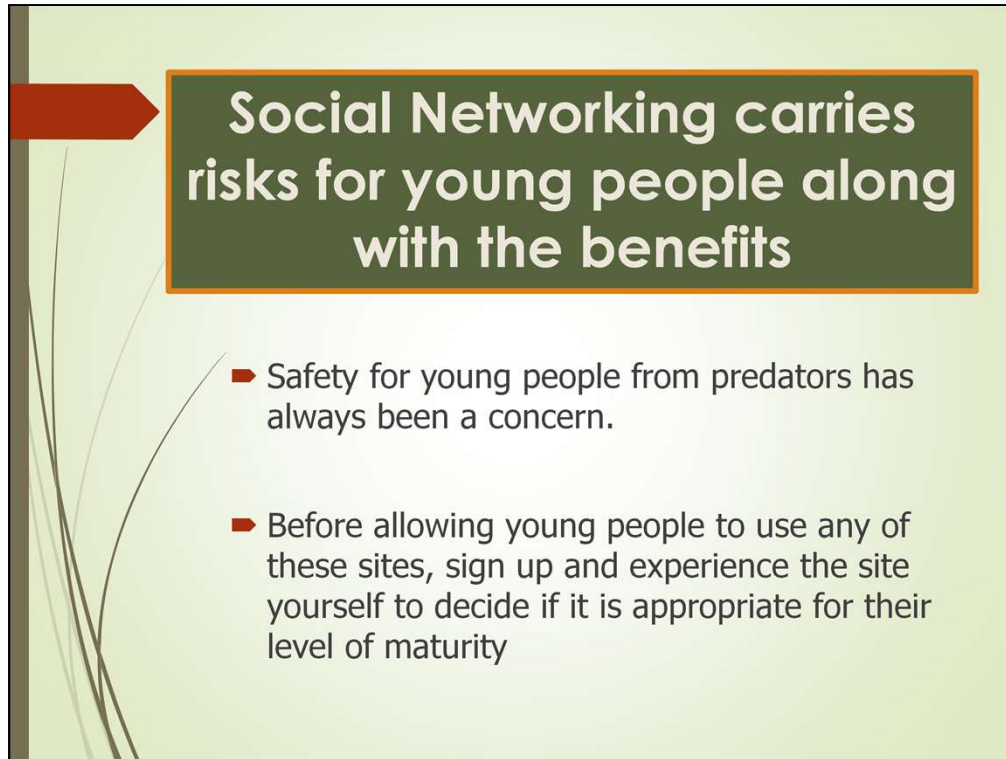
- **Children's personal information is at risk.** The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) protects every child under the age of 12. When a child uses a false birthdate, this Federal law cannot protect their personal information from being collected and shared with third party advertisers.
- **Children under 13 don't have the hardware upstairs to make smart decisions online.** Before age 12 it's difficult, if not impossible, for a child to fully grasp the impact of their actions upon others, online or otherwise.
- **Lying is just plain wrong.** Sure, giving a fake birthdate to Facebook seems like a harmless white lie, but it's a lie nonetheless.

Finally, if your young child simply **MUST** have a social life online, there's *Club Penguin*, *WebKinz*, and *Whyville*. Each of these offer restricted and supervised networking.

Source: huffingtonpost.com

### Agree on a game plan


Use the [InternetSafety.com](http://InternetSafety.com) [Gameplan™](http://InternetSafety.com) to formally agree on your family's guidelines for using the Internet. Post them near the family computer as a reminder. Ensure that your kids know to never share personal information on the Internet and that they should tell you about any online activity or contact that makes them uncomfortable.




Communicating with someone not known to a child in real life, sharing personal information and/or putting an image of a child on any site could put them at risk for victimization. Here are potential hazards to consider:

- People are anonymous and can pretend to be anyone else. There is no way of knowing that people you meet and are communicating with are who they say they are.
- Potential offenders are versed in age-appropriate topics for children and can often convincingly make a child believe they understand the child like no one else
- Once a child has a comfort level with an individual, he or she is likely to divulge personal information
- Online relationships have a tendency to escalate quickly
- Children can turn to establishing online relationships and neglect the real-life relationships they may have with family or friends
- A child can become addicted or dependent on chatting online





- Ensure that privacy settings meant to protect young people are in place—every site has different privacy options
- Keep the computer in a high-traffic part of the house
- Talk to young people about sexual victimization and potential online danger—someone online may not be telling the truth about themselves



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### **Protect your computer**

Take advantage of the software that exists to help parents manage their children's computer experience.

In only a few minutes, parental control software can


- block inappropriate websites,
- restrict the amount of time that your kids use the Internet and
- monitor their Instant Messenger chats to protect against predators.



Instant messaging (IM) is popular with children and teens because it allows them to stay in touch with friends and family. However, like any online activity, there are some associated risks.

Here are a few IM safety precautions you can take with your child:

- Encourage your children to trust their instincts and tell you if they experience something that makes them feel scared or uncomfortable
- Know who your children are communicating with. Review their buddy lists periodically and help them to remove anyone who you don't know and trust in real life
- Teach your children about the possible dangers of adding a "friend of a friend"
- Teach children to **never** meet in person with anyone they first "met" online



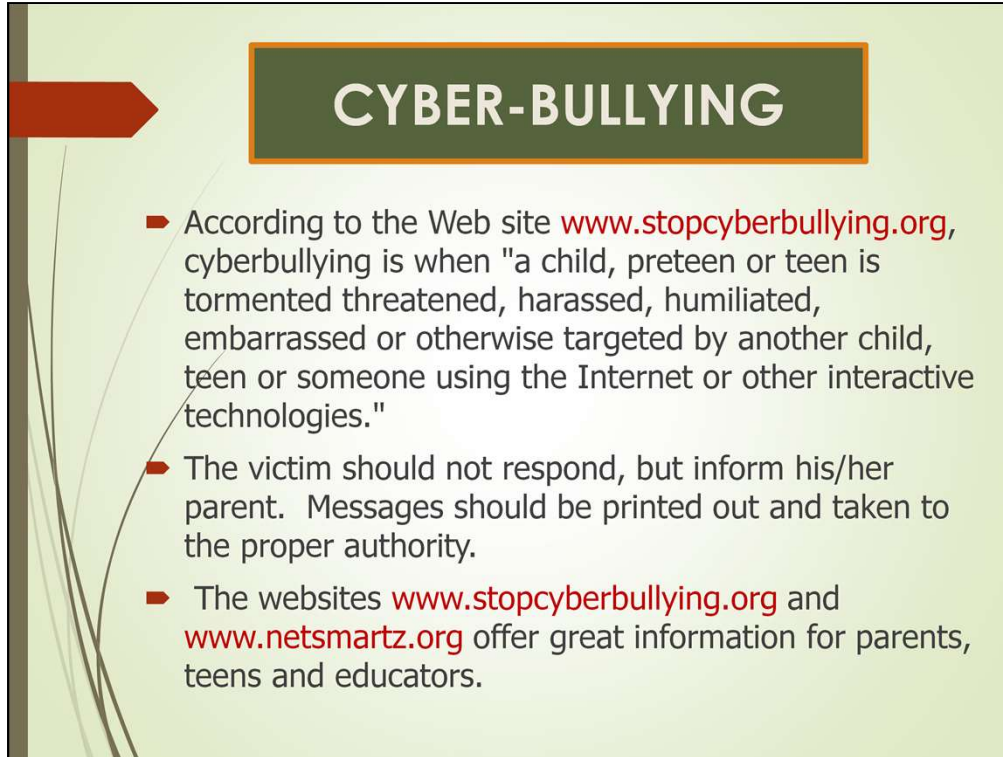
- Check with your internet provider about features to block young people's access to adult-oriented sites
- Sending inappropriate pictures can be a problem later for a young person because online pictures can be retrieved
- To avoid young people's possibly risky behavior, recharge their cell phones each evening in parents' bedrooms

- Make sure your children know to keep their personal information private. Remind them that nothing anyone types on the Internet is private, especially things posted in profiles
- Supervise all of your child's online activities, and be especially vigilant when it comes to your child's use of webcams
- Tell your child not to reply to unsolicited messages from individuals he or she does not know

There are new APPS and Software available all the time and it's difficult to keep up with what the young people are using on their cell phones and other devices. You are the parents – do not be afraid to demand transparency from your children. It is not an invasion of privacy, it is protecting the ones you love.

There is no excuse for parents to be under-educated about the internet.

NetSmartz411.com - resource for answering questions about Internet safety, computers, and the Web



## CYBER-BULLYING

- According to the Web site [www.stopcyberbullying.org](http://www.stopcyberbullying.org), cyberbullying is when "a child, preteen or teen is tormented threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, teen or someone using the Internet or other interactive technologies."
- The victim should not respond, but inform his/her parent. Messages should be printed out and taken to the proper authority.
- The websites [www.stopcyberbullying.org](http://www.stopcyberbullying.org) and [www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org) offer great information for parents, teens and educators.

With the Internet now incorporated into children's daily lives, harassment can take many forms.

Cyberbullies use technology to

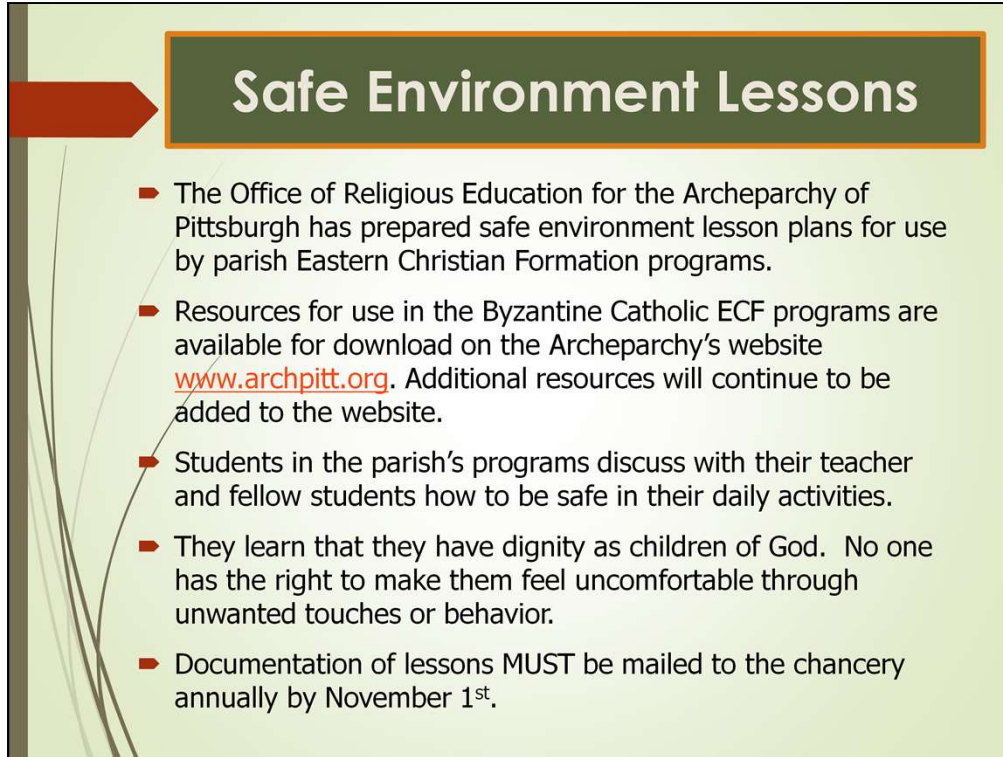
- spread rumors and gossip,
- steal passwords to assume someone else's identity,
- post pictures of someone without their consent, and
- threaten or harass with offensive language.

The speed at which information travels online can be frightening, and because most people use aliases, cyberbullies are hard to track.

This form of harassment is particularly disturbing for children because it is most often their peers who are harassing them.

According to one victim, the difference between being bullied at school and being bullied on the Internet is that you cannot get away from it. Cyberbullying follows you, even after you get home from school.

The websites cited on the screen have a wealth of information on this topic.

A graphic with a light green background and a dark green header box containing the title "Safe Environment Lessons" in white. To the left of the header is a red arrow pointing right. Below the header is a list of five bullet points, each preceded by a red square. The text is in a dark green font. The background also features some faint, abstract line art in the lower left corner.

## Safe Environment Lessons

- The Office of Religious Education for the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh has prepared safe environment lesson plans for use by parish Eastern Christian Formation programs.
- Resources for use in the Byzantine Catholic ECF programs are available for download on the Archeparchy's website [www.archpitt.org](http://www.archpitt.org). Additional resources will continue to be added to the website.
- Students in the parish's programs discuss with their teacher and fellow students how to be safe in their daily activities.
- They learn that they have dignity as children of God. No one has the right to make them feel uncomfortable through unwanted touches or behavior.
- Documentation of lessons MUST be mailed to the chancery annually by November 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Safe Environment Training for Children is required by the audit**

#### **My catechists are uncomfortable teaching this. What can I do?**

No one wants to think about something this horrible, but all adults are responsible for protecting children. Be sure to provide training for the catechists and review the lessons with the catechists prior to the lesson. If the catechist is still not comfortable teaching this, the pastor, coordinator or another catechist should be sought to teach this particular lesson.

#### **My catechists are concerned they will not know what to do if a child discloses abuse to them.**

That is a common fear and training in this area is very effective. We do not investigate, we report. Adults need to remember this is about protecting children. All they need to do is hear what the child is telling them and do what is necessary to protect the child. See free course at PA Child Welfare Resource Center.

#### **I believe morality should be taught in the home, not in school. Does my child have to attend these training classes?**

You are right, morality is best taught in the home, but this is personal safety training, not morality class and not sex education. Catholic moral theology compels us to keep children safe. Parents are the primary educators of their children, and those who do not want their children to participate in the school/religious education portion of the training may opt out by signing the opt-out form. They should still receive the curriculum and assistance in how to teach their children to be safe.

If there is resistance on the part of the parents for the catechist to address these topics, we highly recommend that another professional person come into the program to present the information (medical professional, counselor, etc.)



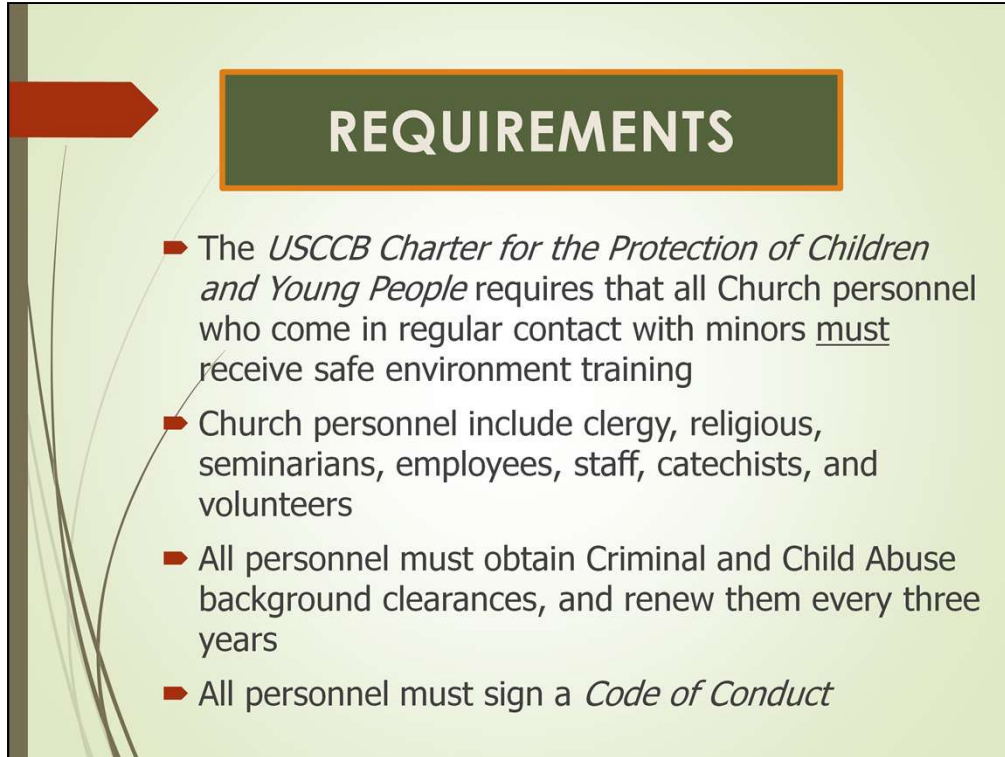
**Philippians 4:4-9, 13** Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (RSVCE)

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup> Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. <sup>6</sup> Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. <sup>9</sup> What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you.

<sup>13</sup> I can do all things in him who strengthens me.





## REQUIREMENTS

- The *USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* requires that all Church personnel who come in regular contact with minors must receive safe environment training
- Church personnel include clergy, religious, seminarians, employees, staff, catechists, and volunteers
- All personnel must obtain Criminal and Child Abuse background clearances, and renew them every three years
- All personnel must sign a *Code of Conduct*

These are all requirements of *The Charter*.

- Background Clearances – Criminal and Child Abuse
- Accept the Code of Conduct
- Safe Environment Training

The Archeparchy of Pittsburgh considers everyone “Personnel” – whether or not you have direct access or contact with children

Note that all personnel must be in compliance with these Safe Environment policies BEFORE taking an active role or employment in the Archeparchy.

We should all find comfort in knowing that our church has such strict rules in place to protect children and youth.



## New Instructions for Clearances

### **Clearances must be renewed every five years.**

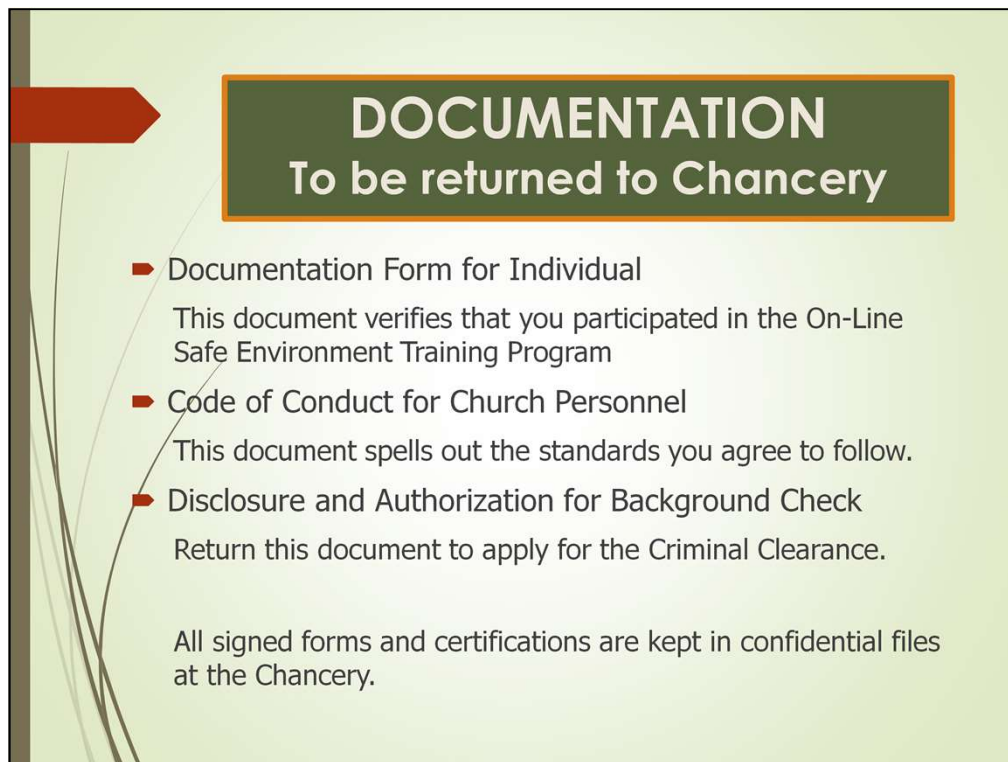
Effective immediately, you can apply for your **Child Abuse Clearance** online. Each volunteer is first asked to create an “Individual Account” on the Child Welfare Portal. You will then be sent an email confirming your Keystone ID and giving you a password. This is a one-time operation. Once you have your account you will be able to access the online forms.

ALSO – This process will give the chancery immediate access to your results so you will not have to mail copies of your certificates. Here’s how the process works:

1. You create your Online Individual Account
2. The Chancery gives you an “Authorization Code” to pay for your clearance
3. You fill out the online form using the code as your “payment”
4. You will receive email notifications as to the status of your clearance request
5. The chancery will also be able to monitor the status of your request

The **Criminal Clearance** will be handled as it was in the past. However, you can email, fax or mail this form to the chancery. Originals are not required.

Note – those who do not have access to the internet may still submit paper forms which are available on the Safe Environment page of the Archeparchy’s website. Or you may contact the chancery office for copies.



These documents can be found with the Essential Information and Handouts on the Safe Environment Page of the Archeparchy website.

If you have not completed the clearances within the last 5 years, please:

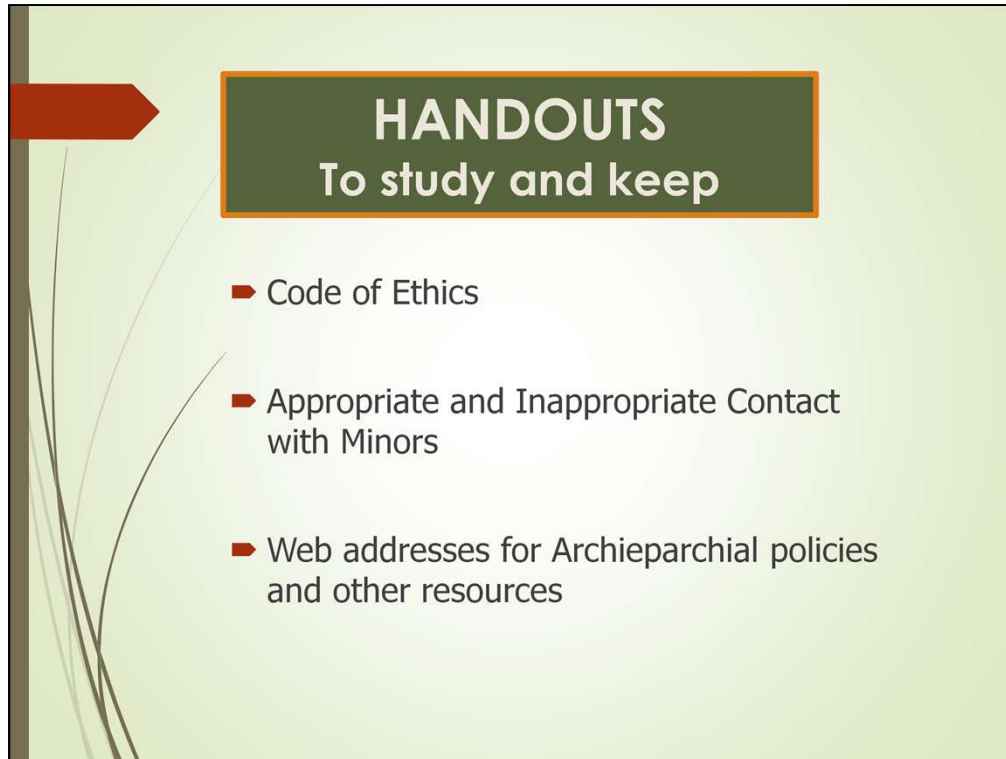
Pennsylvania residents:

1. complete the ***Criminal Background Disclosure and Authorization Form*** and
2. email the Safe Environment Coordinator to receive an Authorization Code for the PA Online Portal to apply for your ***Child Abuse History Certification***

All other state residents:

1. complete the ***NON-PA Background Check Authorization Form*** and mail it to the Safe Environment Coordinator at the chancery

Copies of the clearances will go directly to the chancery.



Please read these documents which are available on the website Safe Environment Page under *Essential Information and Handouts*.



**"Let the children come to me  
and do not stop them  
because the Kingdom of  
Heaven  
belongs to such as these."**

**Matthew 19:14**

Thank you for your participation in the On-Line Safe Environment Training, and thank you for your willingness to serve your church.

**Credits/Notes:**

Much of the Notes Page information was found on the website [usccb.org/Child](http://usccb.org/Child) and Youth Protection and the Pennsylvania website [KeepKidsSafe.PA.gov](http://KeepKidsSafe.PA.gov).

This PowerPoint presentation and it's corresponding Notes Pages are provided as an educational service for the personnel of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh. It is not to be copied, published or shared elsewhere.