


VIRTUS[™]
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Trust

Protecting God's Children[®]

Touching Safety Program

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Touching Safety Program

The VIRTUS[®] Programs

- The Protecting God's Children[®] program for adults is the awareness program delivered to clergy, staff, parents, and volunteers in the Diocese.
- The Protecting God's Children *Touching Safety* program is the awareness program delivered to children and young people.

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U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

- In June 2002, at a conference in Dallas, Texas, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops produced the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (Charter)*. The *Charter* was further refined and adopted in its current form in December 2002.
- The *Charter* states that those who work closely with children—as well as the children themselves—need to be trained on preventing child sexual abuse.

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U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

- Article 12 of the *Charter* states:
Dioceses/eparchies will establish "safe environment" programs. They will cooperate with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children.

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Commitment of the Diocese

- Committed to the concepts and intent of the *Charter*.
- Actively implementing awareness, education, and training programs for adults on the issue of child sexual abuse.

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Program Elements

- Provides resources and lesson plans to educators.
- Communicate with parents, guardians, and other caring adults about the content, structure, and dates for the lessons.
- Provides age-appropriate lessons to instruct students about the touching safety rules and learning how to recognize unsafe behaviors.


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 **Touching Safety Program**

The Teaching Touching Safety Guide

- Provides parents, guardians, and other caring adults the tools needed to educate their children about touching safety and identifying safe and unsafe friends and adults.
- Teaches parents, guardians, and other caring adults how to respond appropriately to disclosures of abuse, and how to get help for the child and other family members.
- The *Touching Safety* program and the *Teaching Touching Safety Guide* are **NOT** sex education.


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 **Touching Safety Program**

What is Included in a Lesson Plan?

- Designed to teach children the touching safety rules including a child's right to say "no," and the need to communicate about any unwanted or unsafe touch.
- Teaches children how to identify "safe" and "unsafe" friends and adults and works with children to identify the safe and unsafe persons in their lives.
- Exercises are designed to help students think of ways to apply what they've learned.


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 **Touching Safety Program**

Preparation for Educators

- Review lesson plans and age-appropriate videos:
 - Videos provide a brief overview of the lesson for students
 - Videos define vocabulary words for students
 - Videos help "break the ice" on this sensitive topic
- Review the activities and any supplemental materials that accompany each lesson.
- Play video for students. Then engage students with the age-appropriate activities and supplemental materials.

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 **Touching Safety Program**

Commitment from Educators

- Register (if necessary) and log on to www.virtus.org.
- Click on the "Educator" tab and read through all the resource material.
- Read and use *Teaching Touching Safety — A Guide for Parents, Guardians, and other Caring Adults*.
- Download the lesson plans and any supplemental materials.

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