

### Shepherding God's Children

Providing a safe environment for youth by promoting education and awareness of child sexual abuse | Fall 2016

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### All Diocesan Employees Must Be VIRTUS Trained

As a reminder, everyone who is employed by the Catholic Diocese of Wichita must attend VIRTUS training and be background checked before their first day of work. This includes all part-time employees such as organists, bookkeepers, cleaning professionals, and childcare workers. The requirement for all employees to be trained in VIRTUS went into effect November, 2015. Please contact Michelle Pickert with any questions at pickertm@catholicdioceseofwichita.org or 316-440-1731.

### **National Bullying Prevention Month**

October is National Bullying Prevention Month, a time to empower youth and adults to treat each other with the kindness and dignity that all of God's children deserve.

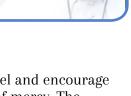
Bullying is any intentional, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is directed at a specific target and is usually repeated over time. There are five types of bullying: physical, verbal, social, sexual/gender, and cyberbullying. Kids who are bullied may experience negative issues such as depression, stress-related health complaints, and decreased academic performance. Kids who bully and kids who witness bullying are also subject to negative

emotional and psychological effects.





(Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium #114)

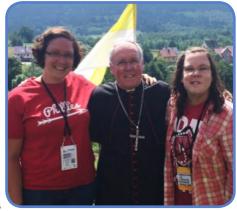


Some of the most effective ways to combat bullying are to model and encourage positive social interactions and to promote attitudes and acts of mercy. The Diocesan Safe Environment Office encourages schools and parishes to use the month of October and the remainder of the Jubilee Year of Mercy to practice acts of kindness and demonstrate a sense of unity within each community.

For Bullying Prevention Month resources, contact Michelle Pickert, Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator, at <a href="mailto:pickertm@catholicdioceseofwichita.org">pickertm@catholicdioceseofwichita.org</a> or 316-440-1731.

### It's a Small World!

Michelle Pickert, Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator, was blessed to travel to Poland for the 2016 World Youth Days. During the trip, the Wichita pilgrim group participated in a day of catechesis led by Bishop Malone from Buffalo, New York. VIRTUS Facilitators may recognize Bishop Malone from the introduction he provides on the VIRTUS: Protecting God's Children video. Bishop Malone was pleased that Michelle had met his "digital self," too!



Laura Klenda (Holy Family Parish, Marion), Bishop Malone, and Michelle Pickert





### **Online Safety Resources**

Keeping youth safe online has become a growing concern. According to a 2015 Pew Study, 73% of teens have smartphones, 87% of teens have access to a laptop or desktop computer, and 58% of teens have or have access to a tablet computer (Pew Research Center). Thanks to the ever-changing nature of social media and device applications, most parents, educators, and professionals have a difficult time keeping up with the technology that youth use every day. Fortunately, there are several organizations that provide upto-date technology information and offer tools to help parents monitor and block their children's internet usage.

Visit NetSmartz.org for the latest information on social media, cyberbullying, sexting, and more. A program of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, NetSmartz. org contains videos, articles, and games geared toward parents, educators, teens, and kids.

There are many internet accountability tools that allow parents to view their children's internet and smartphone/tablet usage and to place restrictions on the websites and applications that their children are allowed to use. Such tools enable parents to be active members in their children's technological lives and to help protect their children from pornography, online predators, and inappropriate content. Covenant Eyes and K9 Web Protection are two of many internet accountability programs on the market.

Has your parish or school ever hosted an internet safety workshop for parents and/or educators? The Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center, the Sedgwick County Exploited and Missing Children's Unit, and the Kansas Children's Service League offer presentations on ways to keep kids safe online.

Contact Michelle Pickert at pickertm@catholicdioceseofwichita.org or 316-440-1731 for more resources and information.

### Sample VIRTUS Session Advertisement

Parishes and schools are welcome to use the following announcement when advertising upcoming VIRTUS sessions in bulletins, newsletters, and websites:

[The Catholic Diocese of Wichita] will be hosting a VIRTUS: Protecting God's Children session on [Tuesday, July 7th] at [3 pm] in the [Conference Room]. VIRTUS is a three hour child sexual abuse awareness training that teaches adults to create safe environments and to recognize and report any abuse that may occur. All volunteers who work with youth and all diocesan employees are required to attend a VIRTUS session before starting their work. Please visit www.virtus.org and click on the "First-Time Registrant" button to register for the session. This training is for adults only.

### The Lord's Diner-Updated VIRTUS Requirements

Since it opened its doors in February, 2002, The Lord's Diner has responded to the hunger and food insecurity of thousands of men, women and children. This past summer, the Diner served its three millionth meal. Its care of the hungry is a hallmark of Stewardship in the Diocese of Wichita. It is a unique ministry in that it is comprised of both static and mobile locations and the volunteers who serve are nearly 50% Catholic and 50% non-Catholic. Given these logistical factors, volunteers of The Lord's Diner were not initially required to participate in VIRTUS training. Nevertheless, it is diocesan policy that all volunteers 18 years and older who have regular contact\* with youth attend a VIRTUS: Protecting God's Children training and be background checked before beginning their volunteer work.

In the past, The Lord's Diner volunteers have only been background checked. Now, in an effort to maintain the safety of our youth and to maintain consistent standards across the diocese, Bishop Kemme has requested that The Lord's Diner volunteers be VIRTUS trained. Effective immediately, all new Diner volunteers 18 years and older will be required to attend a VIRTUS training session before volunteering. Current volunteers will be highly encouraged to attend a VIRTUS session, if they have not done so already. VIRTUS facilitators in the Wichita and Pittsburg areas will be asked to help provide additional training sessions to accommodate these groups. Please contact Michelle Pickert with any questions at 316-440-1731 or pickertm@catholicdioceseofwichita.org.

\* "Regular contact" is defined as contact with minors more than once a calendar year, or even just once when the activity includes driving, an overnight stay, restroom and/or locker room supervision, or the absence of adult supervision. (Policy on Suspected Abuse of Children)



### Upcoming VIRTUS Sessions:

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1 Holy Savior, Wichita 1 pm to 4 pm

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9 Holy Cross, Hutchinson 2 pm to 5 pm - in Spanish

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9 Church of the Magdalen, Wichita 2 pm to 5 pm

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11 St. Catherine of Siena, Wichita 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12 Holy Cross, Hutchinson 6 pm to 9 pm

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15 St. Francis of Assisi, Wichita 9 am to 12 pm

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18 St. Thomas Aquinas, Wichita 6 pm to 9 pm

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6 Church of the Magdalen, Wichita 6 pm to 9 pm

> MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7 St. Peter Parish, Wichita 6 pm to 9 pm

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Wichita 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9 Holy Cross, Hutchinson 6 pm to 9 pm

Participants should pre-register at <u>www.virtus.org</u>.

### **NEW Safe Environment Brochures Available**

The Diocesan Safe Environment Office has printed updated brochures that outline the diocese's commitment to preventing child abuse and the procedures for reporting allegations of abuse. Brochures were mailed or delivered to all diocesan parishes and schools during the first two weeks of September. Larger parishes have been given 30 brochures and smaller parishes have been given 20 brochures. High schools have been given 50 brochures and elementary schools have been given 25 brochures. The brochures should be placed in pamphlet racks and other locations where parishioners and parents have access to them. You may view the brochure at the end of this newsletter. To order additional copies, please contact Michelle Pickert, Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator, at <a href="mailto:pickertm@catholicdioceseofwichita.org">pickertm@catholicdioceseofwichita.org</a> or 316-440-1731.

### Parish School of Religion (PSR) Report Deadlines

- The Catechist Information Report gathers catechists' contact information, VIRTUS training dates, and background check dates. This report was due on Friday, September 9th.
- The Enrollment Numbers Report gathers enrollment and curriculum information for each PSR program. This report is due on Friday, October 14th.
- **Safe Environment lessons** must be taught in each PSR Classroom. Attendance information is recorded at <a href="www.VIRTUS.org">www.VIRTUS.org</a> under the "Safe Environment" tab. Safe Environment lessons are due to be taught and recorded by Friday, **November 4th**.
- The Absent/Opt Out Report documents when Safe Environment lesson plans are sent home to parents of students who were absent or opted out of the classroom Safe Environment lesson. This report is due on Friday, November 4th.

Each PSR report will now be submitted using Google spreadsheets. Google spreadsheets are very similar to Excel spreadsheets. The main difference is that Google spreadsheets are completed online; information will be entered into a website instead of emailing an Excel spreadsheet to the Office of Faith Formation. Every parish has their own spreadsheet. The Catechist Information report, Enrollment Numbers report, and Absent/Opt Out report are each located on a different tab of the spreadsheet. Parish Catechetical Leaders and Pastors were sent an email that included the link to their parish's spreadsheet. Please contact Jennifer Walker, Office Coordinator for the Office of Faith Formation, at 316-269-3940 or walkerj@catholicdioceseofwichita.org with any questions.

### Safe Environment - Catholic Youth Ministry

All diocesan Catholic Youth Ministry (CYM) programs are required to complete the annual Safe Environment lessons for youth who are not currently attending a Catholic High School or Parish School of Religion (PSR). Lessons for CYM programs and PSRs are due to be taught and recorded on the VIRTUS website by Friday, November 4th. Youth Ministers and Parish Catechetical Leaders were informed about this and other Safe Environment updates during the Catechetical Summits on August 20th (Wichita) and August 21st (Chanute). Please contact Michelle Pickert, Safe Environment Coordinator, at 316-440-1731 or pickertm@catholicdioceseofwichita.org with any questions.

### **VIRTUS Online Bulletins**

Parish Safe Environment Coordinators are encouraged to run the VIRTUS Training Bulletin Reports for their locations and follow up with all employees who are two or more bulletins out of date. This process should be done on a quarterly basis to ensure that employees and parishes are in compliance with the diocesan Safe Environment policy. Parish Coordinators may contact Michelle Pickert at 316-440-1731 with any questions about accessing the Training Bulletin Report on <a href="https://www.virtus.org">www.virtus.org</a>.



## MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

The Catholic Diocese of Wichita maintains a Safe Environment Program designed to prevent, identify, and respond to abuse by providing appropriate education to Diocesan personnel and volunteers. This program addresses inappropriate behavior and indicates the warning signs of abusive behavior. The VIRTUS program and the Code of Ethical Standards for Church Personnel and Volunteers are integral components of the Safe Environment Program.

Safe environment awareness training, which is required of all clergy, employees and volunteers who work with youth, is a comprehensive program to prevent child sexual abuse in our Catholic churches, schools and activities. The Diocese of Wichita uses the VIRTUS *Protecting Cod's Children* program.



Office of Safe Environment
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF WICHITA

424 North Broadway · Wichita, Kansas 67202 WEB www.CatholicDioceseOfWichita.org PHONE 316-269-3900 · FAX 316-269-3902

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The dignity of every human person demands from us an uncompromising commitment to respect and care for them. This is especially true for children and youth. Our Safe Environment



Diocese of Wichita is our effort to ensure that every child and young person under our pastoral care is received and treated as their dignity deserves.

Program in the

I invite you to read carefully this brochure that you are holding. It spells out our efforts to create a safe environment for children in our parishes, schools and other diocesan institutions and their programs. We do this by offering and requiring safe environment training so that many are aware of the signs of child sexual abuse and will take steps to report it. We are committed to following our policies when a complaint is received that a child has been allegedly abused by a person in a position of trust. Together, we must do our part in stopping this scourge in our culture and world.

Thank you for your interest in our Safe Environment ministry and for your participation in understanding, reporting and preventing child abuse.

Bishop Carl A. Kemme D.D. Bishop of Wichita

## Protecting God's Children

Understanding, Reporting, and Preventing Child Abuse





# Reaching Out To You

## We hope to reach out to those who have been sexually abused as minors by anyone serving in the Church.

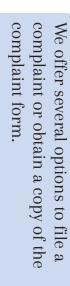
We will help you obtain support by:

- Providing information about counseling through individual therapy and/or support.
- Providing information about spiritual directors and/or spiritual healing resources.

We promise a compassionate and pastoral response to help in the healing and reconciliation process.

We are open to and respect your complaint.

Both justice and compassion call us to respond to the harm you have experienced from a person in a position of trust. We want to listen and address the hurt that may have occurred when pastoral care was exercised improperly. We will proceed at the pace you set, respecting your need to determine when, how and where you wish to speak.



- To report a case of child abuse to civil authorities, call 911 or the Department for Children and Families at 1-800-922-5330.
- 2. To report abuse to the diocese, call the Victim Assistance Coordinator at 316-269-3945.
- 3. Call or visit the Chancery and ask for a copy of the *Complaint Form for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor.* If you would like to speak to someone, please ask for:

Victim Assistance Coordinator Catholic Diocese of Wichita 424 N. Broadway St., Wichita 316-269-3945.

- Talk to your parish priest
- i. Download a copy of the complaint form. Visit: <u>CatholicDioceseofWichita.org.</u> Under the "Links & Resources" tab, select "Protection of Youth."
- The Catholic Diocese of Wichita's *Policy* on the Suspected Abuse of Children (November 2015) includes a copy of the complaint form and *Protocol of Receiving, Investigating and Treating a Complaint of Child Sexual Abuse.*

