



Circle of Grace Personal Safety Education

Dear Parent,

Your child will be offered safe environment/personal safety education in accordance with Article 12 of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* which states “Diocese/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.

The program your parish or school is offering may consist of one or more of the following presentations, followed by classroom or small group discussion as appropriate for each age group:

1. *Circle of Grace Curriculum Kinder to High School Level*
2. *Strong Voices, Smart Choices Elementary Level DVD*
3. *Personal Power; A Gut Check on Safety DVD Middle School Level*
4. *Behind the Screens High School Level DVD*
5. *Healthy Happy Holy; Edge Program, Middle School Level Presentation*
6. *NetSmartz Internet Safety Training – Elementary and Middle School Level*

Why is it important to help our children understand the importance of a safe environment at church?

God intends our relationships in life to be experiences of divine love. Respectful, nurturing, loving relationships increase our understanding of our own value and help us to love others. It is never too early to help children and young people understand how very special they are and how relationships in life are called to be sacred. Understanding this can help them to protect the special person they are and to be respectful of others. Adults, especially parents, as they strive to provide a safe and protective environment, hold the responsibility to help children and young people understand and respect their own dignity and that of others. A truly safe and protective environment is one where children and young people recognize when they are unsafe and know how to bring their concerns, fears, and uncertainties to the trusted adults in their lives.

Safe environment/personal safety education goes beyond just protection by helping children and young people understand the sacredness of who they are and how to seek help through their relationships with trusted adults. Please feel free to contact the Office for Safe Environment and Child and Family Resources at 361-882-6191 if you would like more information. **Should you choose to opt your child out of receiving this curriculum as integrated in their courses, please fill out the attached form and return to the Director of Religious Education at your parish or your child’s classroom teacher if your child attends one of our Catholic schools.**

