



# ***Protecting God's Children***<sup>®</sup>

Participant Workbook

VERSION 3.0



Thank you for taking the time to attend this interactive workshop. For future reference, please complete the information below:

Date of Session: \_\_\_\_\_

Class Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Facilitator Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Online Registration Login Identification Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address (used during the registration process): \_\_\_\_\_

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Video 1

***A TIME TO PROTECT GOD'S CHILDREN™***

One out of every five adult women and one out of every 10 adult men say they were molested as children. This means that there are an estimated 40 million adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse in the United States alone. It is time to put a stop to this crime and protect all our children! To effectively prevent child sexual abuse, adults must first learn important facts.



**Group Discussion**

What are some of your reactions to the video?

How did the abuse affect the victims?

What are some reasons that children don't tell anyone about being abused?

What did you learn about perpetrators?

What are some safety concerns regarding young people, electronic devices and the Internet?

## *Myths and Facts from the Video*

The following statements are some of the widely held myths about child sexual abuse. While there may be elements of truth apparent in each myth, the reality of myths is that they may blind us to the truth. Separating myths from the facts is key to understanding the issues surrounding child sexual abuse, preventing the abuse from happening and forming a clear plan for addressing the issue in our homes, parishes, schools and communities.

**Myth:** Child abusers can be identified solely based on their physical characteristics.

**Fact:**

**Myth:** Strangers are responsible for most child sexual abuse.

**Fact:**

**Myth:** Most sex abusers are homosexual.

**Fact:**

**Myth:** Clergy abuse children because of their promise of celibacy.

**Fact:**

**Myth:** Children usually lie about child sexual abuse.

**Fact:**

## Video 2

***A PLAN TO PROTECT GOD'S CHILDREN™******Step One—Know the Warning Signs***

Knowing the warning signs of a potential perpetrator's behavior can help us to recognize the early indications of someone engaging in an inappropriate relationship with a child or youth. Understanding these warning signs assists us in developing concrete guidelines and formulating action plans that will prevent child abuse from happening.

**List some of the possible behavioral warning signs of an individual exhibiting inappropriate behavior that were illustrated in the video:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

**Group Discussion**

How do the actions of a person with inappropriate behavior differ from that of a person who knows the rules and follows them?

**Personal Reflection**

A good way to measure if any type of adult-to-minor behavior is appropriate utilizes the **PAN** acronym, meaning that behavior at the location be **P**ublic, **A**ppropriate and **N**on-Sexual in nature. What are some ways to exhibit behavior that is PAN?

## **Step Two—Control Access through Screening**

Child molesters need access to children to commit their crimes. One of the most effective ways to prevent abuse in our homes, parishes, schools and communities is to implement plans that effectively control access to our children.

When we are careful about screening those to whom we entrust our children, we send a message to potential molesters that we are alert about child sexual abuse.



### **Tools for Controlling Access to Children**

- Create procedures to determine who has access to children.
- Use written, standard employment and volunteer applications.
- Require criminal background checks. Complete face-to-face interviews.
- Check all references.
- Regularly review guidelines and policies for adults working with minors and require everyone to be in compliance.
- Communicate the Church's commitment to keeping children safe when speaking with new applicants.

### **Personal Reflection**

**Staff and Volunteers**—What are the barriers or obstacles that keep you from fully implementing screening programs in your faith communities (e.g., lack of time, lack of money, lack of organization, etc.)?

**Parents and Guardians**—What are some of the ways you presently control access to your child/youth? Do you check childcare references? Do you know your child's friends and their parents? Do you know where your child is at all times and whom your child is with? How do you select and screen babysitters? Are all in-home computers located in open-access areas? Do you regularly monitor your child's cellular phone use? What about the other electronic devices located in your home that have access to the Internet?

## Step Three—Monitor All Ministries and Programs

Effectively monitoring all ministries eliminates any opportunity for an adult to be alone with a child in an isolated area, including online interactions. Being aware of what is going on in our parishes, schools, homes, communities and electronic devices is a critical step in keeping children safe. All programs involving youth should be reviewed regularly to ensure that proper policies and procedures are being followed.

**When reviewing the safety measures within your program, here is a checklist to consider:**

**Does your ministry/program...**

Yes	No	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Identify secluded areas and develop policies regarding their use?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Lock empty rooms, limit the quantity of keys and know exactly who has the keys?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Ensure adults do not allow children to enter staff-only areas?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Require that adults meet with children only in areas where other adults can pass by, and see or hear the interaction?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Have supervisors perform regularly scheduled—in addition to random—status checks on activities and programs?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Ensure enough adults are involved in programs?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Schedule regular and thorough reviews of all children's programs and activities?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Have "sign-in" and "release" policies and procedures for adults to drop off and pick up children?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9. Make sure all youth Internet activities are closely monitored with appropriate blocking and filtering software installed on any electronic device with Internet capabilities?

### Personal Reflection

**Staff and Volunteers**—What could be done to improve the monitoring of ministries/programs at your locations or any places where your ministries gather?

**Parents and Guardians**—How can you more effectively monitor the programs and activities in which your child is involved? Do you monitor their use of computers, cell phones and video games? Do you monitor their participation in after-school activities, birthday events, slumber parties and family gatherings? Do you personally model behavior to help youth see appropriate Internet usage?

## Step Four—Be Aware of Child and Youth Behavior



Parents are the ultimate educators of their children. They must talk to, listen to and observe their children if they are to be alert to the subtle signs of possible problems.

As clergy, staff, volunteers and caring adults, we too must pay attention to what's happening with the children in our churches, schools and programs. Communication and awareness are the keys to detecting when children are, or could be, in danger.

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### Group Discussion

What are some ways we can be aware of what is happening with the children in our care?

1. Listen to what children tell you.
2. Believe what children tell you.
3. Be alert to changes in a child's behavior.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

### Group Discussion

How can we, as parents and committed adults, prepare our children and young people to resist the overtures of a person with inappropriate boundaries?



## Step Five—Communicate Your Concerns

How often have you heard someone say, "I had an uneasy feeling at the time, like something wasn't right?" Adults must learn to pay attention to these feelings and communicate their concerns about situations that can potentially place children or youth in harm's way. This can be one of the most difficult, but important, steps in the process of eliminating child sexual abuse.

### The following examples include ways to communicate concerns:

If you are aware of a potential warning sign:

- Speak to the person involved, and/or
- Speak directly to the person's supervisor

If you suspect or know that a child is being, or has been abused:

- Call the child abuse hotline for your area (available through an Internet search or in your phone directory)

If you suspect or know that a child is being, or has been abused by an employee or volunteer in the diocese:

- First report to the child abuse hotline for your area, and then call the diocese

If a child is in immediate danger:

- Call the police or dial 911

## Group Discussion

What would you find most difficult about communicating your concerns? Why?

- Fear of being wrong
- Concern that the involved adult will become angry
- Fear about causing relationship problems if the person is a friend or family member
- Apprehension about the repercussions from family, the parish and the community
- All* of the above
- Additional concerns: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***My Commitment to Protecting God's Children***

As we conclude this *Protecting God's Children* awareness session for adults, we are each called to make concrete changes to protect the children in our homes, churches, schools and communities. All adults are protectors of children, regardless of the individual's role. You are here because you are a part of the solution to the problem of child sexual abuse.



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### **Personal Reflection**

***Please take a moment to consider the following:***

Am I committed to making a difference in the protection of children in my parish, school or community?

Am I committed to making a difference in the protection of children in my home and neighborhood?

Can I tangibly make a difference?

What specific and tangible changes can I make in each of these areas?

Is there anything in my own behavior that I might modify for the greater protection of children?

What other items would I like to learn about helping my environment to be a safe haven for children?

How will my face and body language appear if abuse is disclosed to me—will I remain calm and then communicate my concerns to the appropriate person?

1. Before or after your first *Protecting God's Children* session (but not both), you will need to register online with the VIRTUS Program. This is required of all participants. If you do not have Internet access and cannot temporarily gain Internet access via school, university, library, work, home or other means, please register with your Facilitator or your coordinator.  
  
Go to <http://www.virtus.org>  
  
On the left-hand side of the page, click the yellow link labeled "Registration."
2. Choose the name of your organization from the pull-down menu by clicking the downward arrow and highlighting your organization. Once your organization is selected, click "Select."
3. Create a user ID and a password you can easily remember. This is necessary for all participants. This establishes your account within your Diocese and the VIRTUS Program. If your preferred user ID is already taken, please choose another user ID. We recommend the use of your email address as the user ID. Click "Continue" to proceed.
4. Provide the information requested on the following page. Several fields are required, such as name, address, phone number and email address. Click "Continue" to proceed.
  - If you do not have an email address, consider obtaining a free email account at [gmail.com](http://gmail.com), or any other free service. This is necessary for your VIRTUS Coordinator to communicate with you. If you cannot obtain an email address, enter: [noaddress@virtus.org](mailto:noaddress@virtus.org). This will notify your VIRTUS Coordinator that you do not have an email address.
  - If you do not have personal Internet access, and you are not able to obtain temporary Internet access, complete the registration process and contact your coordinator. Other options are available for your continued training.
5. Select the PRIMARY location where you work, volunteer or worship. You will be able to select additional locations later if you serve at multiple locations within your organization. Click "Continue" to proceed.
6. Your current list of locations is displayed. If you need to add an additional location, choose YES. Otherwise, choose NO.
7. Select the role(s) that you serve within your organization. Please check all roles that apply. Additionally, if you have a title within your diocese, enter it in the box, i.e., Teacher, DRE, Catechist, etc. If you do not have a title, please briefly describe what you do for the diocese. Click "Continue" to proceed.

(Online Registration Instructions continued on following page)

8. Answer three YES/NO questions and then click "Continue".
9. If you have already attended a *Protecting God's Children* Session, click YES, otherwise click NO.
10. If you chose NO during the previous step, you will be presented with a list of all upcoming sessions within your organization. When you find the session you would like to attend, click the circle next to the title.

If you chose YES during the previous step, skip this step.

11. If you chose YES, you will be presented with a list of all sessions that have been held within your organization. Choose the session you attended by clicking the downward arrow and highlighting the session, and then click "Complete Registration".
12. You will see a message on your screen confirming that you have completed the registration process. If you correctly entered your email address during the process, you will receive an email confirming your information. Additionally, your coordinator may contact you via email with information regarding your continuing training status.

If you have additional questions about the registration process, please contact your session's facilitator, your coordinator, or the VIRTUS Help Desk at 1-888-847-8870.

# Workshop Evaluation

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Please take time to answer the following questions—your feedback is truly appreciated!

Your program/ministry/job function: \_\_\_\_\_ Your role/title: \_\_\_\_\_

Session date/location: \_\_\_\_\_ Facilitator's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Please rate the following:</b>	<b>Poor</b>		<b>Average</b>		<b>Excellent</b>
Your facilitator	1	2	3	4	5
1st Video: <i>A Time to Protect God's Children</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2nd Video: <i>A Plan to Protect God's Children</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Length of the workshop	1	2	3	4	5
Information gained from the workshop	1	2	3	4	5
Group discussion	1	2	3	4	5
Facility/setting	1	2	3	4	5
Overall	1	2	3	4	5

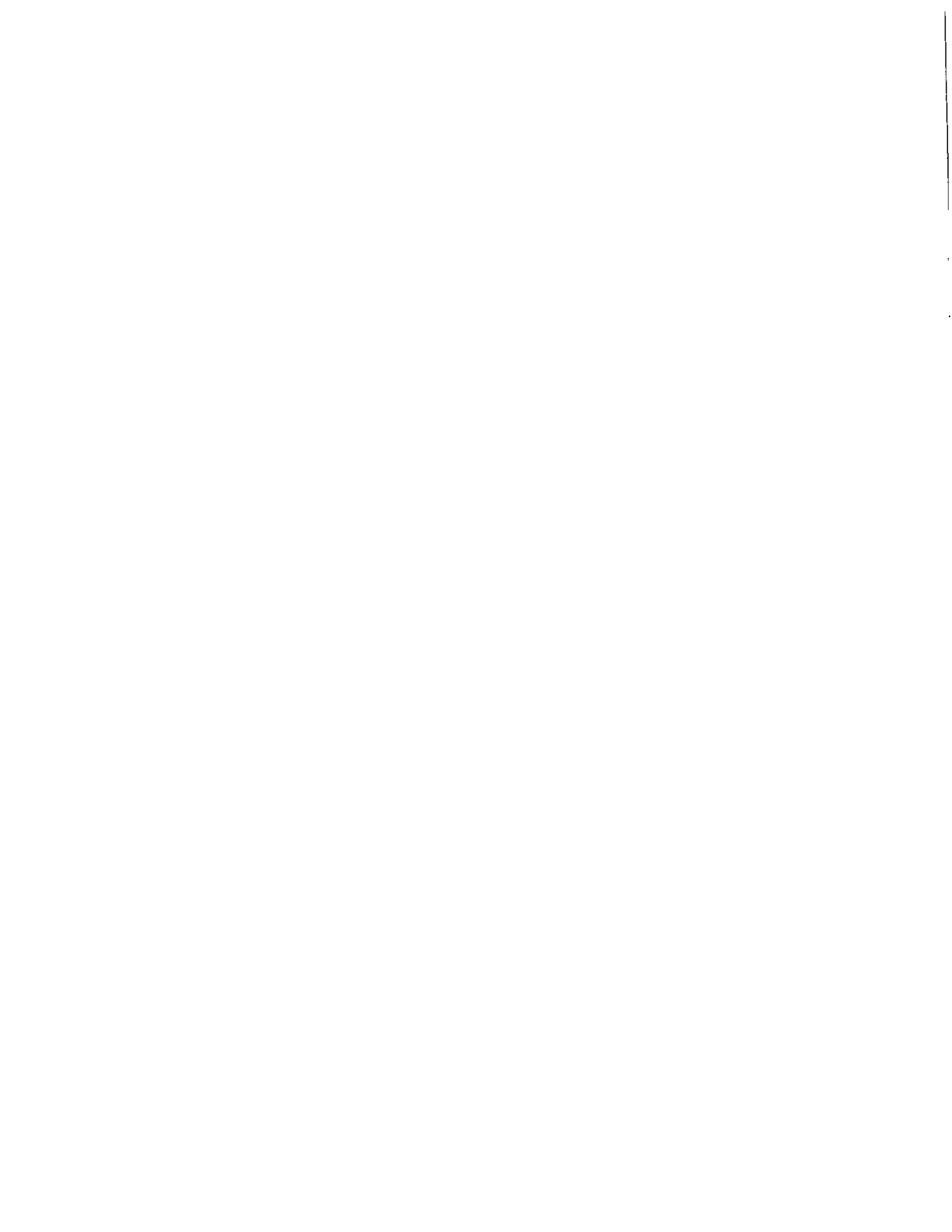
The most useful part of this workshop was \_\_\_\_\_

The least useful part of this workshop was \_\_\_\_\_

Comments regarding the facilitator \_\_\_\_\_

How much does the information from this workshop apply to your program or ministry? \_\_\_\_\_

Other comments or suggestions? \_\_\_\_\_



## What's next?

**1. Did you register for this class?** Each registrant must have an online registration for the *Protecting God's Children* program. There are two ways to register, either prior to the session (pre registration) or after the session (post registration). If you already registered for this session online, then you do not have to register for it again. However, if you did not register for the session, please go to [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org), select "Registration" and follow the prompts. There will be a question during this process that will ask you if you have already attended a Protecting God's Children session. If you have attended, select "yes" and then select the session you attended from the list to post-register. If you have not yet attended a session, select "no" to pre-register yourself for an upcoming session.

**2. How do I receive attendance credit?** Two items are necessary to receive credit for this training: an online registration and your signature on the attendance sheet. Your diocese will review each attendance sheet and compare the material to the online registrations. Once this process is completed, each person's online registration account will be activated and approved for credit.

**3. Continue your training:** Your diocese may request that you complete annual, ongoing training in order to be re-certified each year. The re-certification training will refresh important concepts for protecting youth and may include real-life scenarios that caring adults, educators and parents may face. Please communicate with your parish or diocesan coordinator to obtain more information about your location's ongoing training requirements.

***Thank you for your willingness to serve.***

National Catholic Services, LLC  
3114 East 81st Street, Suite 101  
Tulsa, OK 74137  
Tel: 888-847-8870  
Fax: 918-392-4400