



Parents have the right to insist their parishes and schools are in compliance with the **Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People**. All parishes and schools should be able to show parents that the clergy, employees, and volunteers who work with children are familiar with the warning signs of offenders, what to do if they have a concern about someone, and how to report suspected abuse. Employees and volunteers who work with children also need to have their backgrounds evaluated so parents can have a reasonable assurance that known offenders are not around their children.

What is the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People?

The Charter 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 further acts of abuse.

What does the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People require parishes to do?

The parishes are critical to the implementation of the Charter. It is there that most of the abuse occurred, and it is there that most of the prevention can be done. Parishes need to train all clergy, employees and volunteers with regular contact with children. This is so we can be reasonably sure that people who should not be around children are not around children. All parish employees and volunteers need to have their background checks evaluated for suitability. We would not hire someone found guilty of embezzlement to do our accounting; in the same way, we would not want someone who has committed crimes against children to be in any of our programs. All dioceses have policies and procedures in place that parishes are to follow. Contact your Safe Environment Coordinator to find out how it is done in your diocese.

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. There are many safety issues we teach children: bike safety, water safety, fire prevention, driver's training, etc. Personal safety programs should have age-appropriate lessons that give children the skills they need to protect themselves without frightening them. Keeping children unaware of the dangers around them does not keep them safe. Predators count on children not knowing what to do .

What are the Catholic Church's teachings regarding child sexual abuse?

The Catholic Church teaches that the "human body shares in the dignity of the image of God" (CCC 364). That dignity leads us to foster in every person the belief and awareness that as a person of God they are deserving of love and respect. Dignity is a gift given by God at birth. Abuse of all kind is harmful to that dignity. Children being among the most vulnerable require us to protect that dignity.

*All above information & prayer
from the USCCB's website*

Patron Saints of Children

Infant Jesus of Prague
St. Nicholas
St. Maria Goretti
St. Philomena
St. Raymond Nonnatus

A Prayer for Healing

God of endless love, ever caring, ever strong, always present, always just: You gave your only Son to save us by his blood on the cross. Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace, join to your own suffering the pain of all who have been hurt in body, mind, and spirit by those who betrayed the trust placed in them. Hear the cries of our brothers and sisters who have been gravely harmed, and the cries of those who love them. Soothe their restless hearts with hope, steady their shaken spirits with faith. Grant them justice for their cause, enlightened by your truth. Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts, heal your people's wounds and transform brokenness into wholeness. Grant us the courage and wisdom, humility and grace, to act with justice. Breathe wisdom into our prayers and labors. Grant that all harmed by abuse may find peace in justice. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Scripture

Deuteronomy 32:10 - In a desert land he found him, in a barren and howling waste. He shielded him and cared for him
Matthew 7:12 - So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.
Psalms 139:13-16 - For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

Circle of Grace

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has adopted the **Circle of Grace** program to provide a consistent, comprehensive learning experience for children and young people in grades K through 12 in our schools and religious education classes in order to:

- Promote the dignity and welfare of every child
- Reduce the risk of child sexual abuse or any behavior that harms children
- Complement the Safe and Sacred program that is offered to adults by providing an educational experience that is designed for children

Developed by the Archdiocese of Omaha, the Circle of Grace program has been implemented in over 20 Catholic dioceses across the country. It provides age-appropriate lessons at each grade level that are facilitated in schools and parishes by teachers, catechists, youth ministers and other trained leaders.

The Circle of Grace Program reflects the core teaching of our Catholic faith – the belief of God’s real presence in our lives – which has the ability to transform every aspect of a person’s life. The Circle of Grace signifies that:

- The love & goodness of God surrounds us & all others
- God is always with us & is there to help us in difficult situations

Any questions about the program can be directed to Ed Isakson, Director of Human Resources/Safe Environment Coordinator, at eisakson@archindy.org, (317) 236-1549, or (800) 382-9836, ext. 1549.

A Prayer for Survivors

Come, Holy Spirit, to rest in our broken hearts and tend to our broken lives.

Bear us up on wings of eagles when our hope lies crushed below the cross of our past. Release us from the shame and grieving that hobble our pursuit of joy in our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Comfort our pain.

Help us trust in Christ’s complete victory over evil, so we may endure what we have suffered until that day when all we cannot see and cannot know is finally made clear.

Heal us with a fuller understanding God’s grace, so we may be open to sustenance to continue our recovery. Help us discern the sure direction of God’s whisper when noise and confusion threaten to send us on mistaken pathways.

Provide us generously with Your counsel, so we may not be lost in a wilderness of sorrow, doubt and despair but, rather, are able to hear over our shoulder which way to go, what way turn to choose, which time to rest and which time to push forward.

We ask in the name of Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- April 21 - **Engaging Parents: Forming Family Faith Workshop**, Mount St. Francis, IN (<http://tinyurl.com/formingfamilyfaith>)
- April 25 - **Faithful Citizens Rosary Procession**, following the 12:10 Mass at St. John’s downtown Indy
- April 26 - **Archdiocesan Disability Awareness Mass & SPRED Liturgy**
2015 is the Archdiocesan Disability Awareness Mass & SPRED (Special Religious Development) Family Liturgy. All are welcome for Mass at 10:30 am at Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral, celebrated by Father Pat Beidelman. A reception will follow in the Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center Assembly Hall, where you will have the chance to see some of the faith formation resources available for those with special needs, as well as some local services and organizations that support people with special needs and their families. For more information, please contact Erin Jeffries at (317)236-1448, or ejeffries@archindy.org.

List of Resources

- USCCB’s *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* - (<http://tinyurl.com/USCCBchildren>)
- *Circle of Grace* - Arch Indy’s Training for Children K-12 - (archindy.org/abuse/circle.html)
- Arch Indy’s *Code of Conduct for Adults* - (archindy.org/abuse/code.html)
- Arch Indy’s *Safe & Sacred* training for adults - (<https://safeandsacred-archindy.org>)
- Arch Indy’s *Safe Environment Guidelines* - (archindy.org/abuse/files/Safe%20Environment%20Guidelines.pdf)
- Arch Indy’s *Social Media Guidelines* - (archindy.org/abuse/files/Social%20Media%20Guidelines.pdf)
- Arch Indy’s *Safe & Secure* - (<http://www.archindy.org/abuse/policy.html>)
- How to report abuse, suspicion of abuse, or misconduct - (archindy.org/abuse/reporting.html)

Our Lady, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for us.

*Life Notes is a publication of the Holy Rosary Pro-Life Ministry
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