



## Teaching Safety: Empowering God's Children Safe Environment Training

Each year, the Diocese of Davenport, in response to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, requires that students in Catholic schools and faith formation programs **in grades K-12** receive education in the prevention of child sexual abuse. The prevention of child sexual abuse requires more than adult vigilance and education. It also requires us to give children the age-appropriate background and tools to help them stay safe.

To this end, the Diocese is using the *Teaching Safety: Empowering God's Children* program, sponsored by the VIRTUS program we are currently using to educate adults and volunteers. By clicking [HERE](#) or entering the following into your browser, <https://www.virtusonline.org/educators/Teaching-Boundaries-and-Safety-Guide-English.pdf>, you can access the teaching guide for **parents and guardians**.

In the school and faith formation programs, the *Teaching Safety: Empowering God's Children* lessons are founded on the principles of appropriate relationship boundaries in the broader context of Christian values. All lessons are age-appropriate and help children and young people develop the vocabulary and boundary distinctions necessary to empower them to begin to recognize inappropriate behavior by others, while practicing appropriate relationship boundaries in their own lives. The lessons are presented in age appropriate ways on a regular multi-year cycle in three grade strands: K-2, 3-5 and 6-8. There is no component for preschool.

In 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades, there are still some topics focused on human sexuality itself that are not covered at school and are best left to parents to discuss with their children. As a resource for parents, we may continue to send home materials from Benziger Publishing's *Family Life* series later this year. If those materials are sent home, we ask that families use the materials and return them to school when finished.

As always, we thank you for your support, and may God bless you and your family.

Chad C. Steimle