

# **Roman Catholic Diocese of Boise**

## **CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

- Participants:** The SEW (Safe Environment Program) workshops are held for all employees. Volunteers who have regular contact with children must also attend the program.
- Conducted by:** Safe Environment Trainer  
*Note: This is designed as a live presentation, and must be presented by someone authorized by CYAP. If there are any questions about this, call Dr. Bob Fontaine (208)342-1311; Ext: 5155*
- Goals:** To allow employees to understand the concept of creating a safe environment, and their roles and responsibilities in interacting with minors involved in church programs. Information presented must include:  
(1) elements of a safe environment; (2) the nature of child sexual abuse; (3) prevention of child sexual abuse; (4) appropriate standards of behavior in dealing with minors; (5) mandatory laws on reporting child sexual abuse; (6) how to respond to a disclosure from a child of abuse; (7) the diocesan structure supporting the Safe Environment Program.

### **Resource Materials:**

Videos: Dr. Leah Lamb; Pat Woodbury. Clips from one or more of the following videos, showing a child's disclosure of abuse, may be helpful in the presentation: *Hear Their Cries; Bless the Children; What Do I Say Now?*

### **A packet is provided which includes the following materials:**

- (1) Opening Prayer
- (2) Power Point charts
- (3) Letter from Bishop Michael Driscoll—May 26, 2004
- (4) USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (revised)
- (5) "The Grooming Process"
- (6) "What is Child Abuse"
- (7) Barriers to Disclosure
- (8) Responses to Disclosure
- (9) What Happens When a Report is Made
- (10) Idaho Statutes on Mandatory Reporting
- (11) "Care Enough to Call" brochures
- (12) Boundary Guidelines
- (13) "What Can I Do"----appropriate affection
- (14) List of website resources
- (15) ICR Editorial—Bishop Michael Driscoll—February 20, 2004
- (16) Closing Prayer for Healing
- (17) Myth or Truth Test and Answers
- (18) Criminal Background Check Release Authorization/Questions and Answers
- (19) Workshop Evaluation Forms
- (20) Acknowledgement of Receipt of Sexual Misconduct Policies
- (21) Certificate of Completion
- (22) Ordering of videos and related information
- (23) Sexual Misconduct Policies manual

## Forms completed and submitted:

Attendance Log Sheet

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Policies Form

\*Criminal Background Check Authorization Forms (Note: front and back must be completed)

Background Check FAQ's

Evaluation Form

***\* All employees and volunteers who have regular contact with children must complete a criminal background check. Social security numbers are needed for completion of the checks. Those employed by schools are checked through the State of Idaho and are also fingerprinted. Those employed by schools do not need to complete the authorization forms provided at the "Creating a Safe Environment" workshops as they are already receiving a background check through the State of Idaho.***

## Workshop Guide for Trainers

**Length of Presentation:** (Two to Two and one-half hours)

**Opening prayer:** (3 minutes)

A suggested prayer is provided, or you may create your own with an appropriate safe environment theme.

**Introduction:** (5 minutes):

Begin the program by introducing yourself, and tell the group why you are interested in the safe environment program. Then introduce the group to the safe environment concept.

**A possible introduction might be:**

*Welcome! I want to thank you for your special ministry at our parish and/or school. You are here tonight because we all wish to provide the safest possible environment for our children and youth. They are the future of our Church, and we want to do what we can to help nurture and protect them. Bishop Mike has said that he would like us to do everything we can to assure that in our parishes and schools we create the safest possible environment for our children and young people.*

*In the design of the Diocesan Safe Environment Program, the Bishop has also taken a positive, proactive and preventive approach, designed not only to make sure children are safe in our programs, but also to educate our employees on the issue of child sexual abuse, and how we as a church, and as a society, can help to prevent it. We know our programs are making a difference as more are educated in the area of sexual abuse of our children and youth.*

*First, let's talk about the overall concept of "safe environment."*

**Invite the group to share their ideas on creating a safe environment in the following contexts:**

A. *If you have a two year old child in your house and you look around and decide you want to create the safest possible environment for that child, what kinds of things would you do to make sure the house is safe?*

Generally the group will say things like: cover the electrical outlets, put gates on the stairs, put poisons out of reach, etc. The actual answers are not as important, just re-emphasize that you are looking around the house for things that a two year old might come in contact with, that might harm them, because they do not recognize the danger, or they don't have the skills to prevent the harm.

B. *How about for a child who is seven or eight?*

Generally the group will respond with things like, putting guns out of reach, making sure they know safety rules like for crossing the street, watching when they are outside playing, seeing who their friends are, watching what they watch on TV, monitoring the computer, etc. Here, you can emphasize that because they are older, they can learn rules, and you have to watch not only a confined space, but also as they go out into the world.

C. *How about for a sixteen year old with a driver's license?*

Pray, set rules for who is in the car, where they go, what they do, etc.

**Then ask the group:** *How did you learn these rules, where did you learn that these are dangers, and how to avoid them?*

Participants answer that they learned by experience, by their parents teaching them, by observing what happened to others, by reading about it in the news.

Then explain that as human beings, we learn from the experience of others and from our own experience, but the problem with child sexual abuse, and creating a safe environment for our youth, is we don't always know the true facts about child sexual abuse. There are a lot of myths and misperceptions about it, and we cannot be as vigilant and protective as we may need to be if we don't know the true facts about abuse, and know what the strategies are for how to keep children safe. So this program is to help those involved with our youth to learn the facts, and to help them understand what rules we have in place for creating the safest environment possible for our children and young people.

**Review the purpose of the training (2 minutes)**

Our goal is to 1-Protect children; 2-Protect the Church; 3-Protect you.

As noted earlier in our discussion of a safe environment we will be concentrating in the area of the sexual abuse of our youth and children and how we can assure a safe environment in this area.

Child abuse is contrary to the Gospel values of care and concern that Jesus commands us to have for one another. Child sexual abuse is a longstanding problem of society which is now better recognized and understood, discussed more openly, and dealt with more effectively. This serious

problem cannot be ignored without compromising the integrity of the church's mission and causing grave damage to the whole Body of Christ. There is an urgent need to acknowledge and address openly the possibility of child sexual abuse. When we openly discuss the issue, and educate our faithful, we as a Church can take a proactive stand against child sexual abuse and be a leader in our community in stopping this evil.

The Diocese of Boise is determined to provide a safe environment for the children and young people involved in its ministries, and to assist parents in protecting their children. In acting to prevent those acting on behalf of the Church from harming children, we can also dedicate ourselves to protecting, to the extent possible, all children no matter where they are, by educating both children and parents on the creation of a safe environment. ***In fulfilling this commitment of combating this societal issue, the US Bishops and the Diocese of Boise are requiring that all parishes and schools provide an educational opportunity for parents and children within their program.*** Programs are in place for pre-school-6<sup>th</sup> grade, grades 7-12 and for parents. Outlines of these programs are on the diocesan website and can also be obtained by contacting the Diocesan Pastoral Center, Office of Child, Youth and Adult Protection. Programs are also provided in many of Idaho's public school districts but should not take the place of programs offered through parishes or Catholic schools.

### ***Learning About the Sexual Abuse of Children and Youth***

***Presenter says:*** The first thing we need to do is take a pre-test to see where we are at in our knowledge of child sexual abuse. Consequently, we will now pass out a test to check our current knowledge (provide about 10-15 minutes to take the test).

***Note to Presenters:*** The Diocese has been given a recommendation by the Diocesan Review Board for the Sexual Abuse of Minors to pursue the editing of the Leah Lamb and Patricia Woodbury videos. If the edited version is available it can be shown at this time. The edited video should be no more than 30-45 minutes in length. Once the video is completed the "myth or truth" quiz can be reviewed and correct answers provided. Once all correct answers are provided then trainers can provide the quiz with corrected answers if they wish. If the video is not available the "myth or truth" quiz can be reviewed immediately prior to the power point presentation.

### ***Power Point Presentation***

#### ***Slides***

- # 1**            ***"Creating a Safe Environment for Children and Youth"***
- #2**            ***"How Prevalent is Abuse?"***

#### ***Presenter says:***

- The adult population of Idaho is just under a million people. In the United States, each year, nearly a million children are subjected to some kind of child abuse. Imagine the impact if the entire adult population of Idaho was involved in a mass disaster of some kind. That is the impact of child abuse on our country.
- Experts say that one in three to four girls and one in six to eight boys is abused before they reach the age of 18. Statistically, this means that everyone in this country either has been abused, or knows someone who has been abused. The

long term health impact of this issue is staggering. It should be noted that some question whether there are actually fewer boys abused as boys may be more reluctant to come forward with disclosures.

- We often talk to our children about “stranger danger.” We say don’t go with strangers and don’t talk to strangers but the danger from child sexual abuse will rarely come from someone who is a total stranger to the child. More than half of child sexual abuse occurs within the child’s family unit. At least 70% of child sexual abuse is committed by someone that the child already has a relationship with and is not a total stranger (National Child Abuse and Neglect Data Systems, 2003).
- Sometimes we also think about child sexual abuse as something that happens only in certain places, big cities, only among certain populations, and could not happen in our communities. The statistics show that child sexual abuse cuts across e very ethnic and socioeconomic classification.

### **#3 “Elements of a Safe Environment”**

**Presenter says:** *When we talk about the concept of Safe Environment in our church setting, we talk about some of the same things that we were just discussing, monitoring who comes in to our environment, what our children are exposed to, and monitoring the behavior and dangers that the children in our care come in contact with.*

- *So we screen those who come in contact with our children, by conducting background checks. That way, if there are those who already have a history of being a danger to children, we can prevent that danger from coming into our programs, and help protect our children.*
- *And we establish rules for behavior when people work in our programs, rules that are designed to protect children.*
- *And we teach everyone what those rules are.*
- *Then when people violate the rules, we make sure they know it, and that way we enforce the rules, and reinforce them.*

### **#4 Safe Environment Screening**

**Presenter says:** All employees and all volunteers who have regular contact with minors (under 18) must have a background check and participate in a safe environment workshop. Criminal Background checks are currently being done through Quintana Investigations and include a National Criminal History in all 50 states. The same comprehensive screening is done for both volunteers and employees and uses records which are updated daily with a data base that covers all 50 states for felony, misdemeanor and sexual predator offences using city, state and federal databases.

## **#5 Sexual Misconduct Policies (revised March 26, 2007)**

**Presenter says:** Refer to policies which are included in the packet. Make sure to point out to participants the different rules on behavior. Provide examples of how the rules apply. Discuss any questions that they have about how the rules apply to their situation. Also, provide a brief overview of each of the four identified sections:

- To Protect the Faithful in the Future
- To Promote Healing and Reconciliation With Those Victimized by Sexual Misconduct
- To Guarantee a Fair and Effective Response to Allegations of Sexual Misconduct
- To Ensure Accountability of Our Procedures
- Appendix I—Procedural guidelines for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor by Priests or Deacons
- Appendix II—Procedural Guidelines for Allegations of Sexual Abuse with Adults by Priests or Deacons
- Appendix III—Diocesan Sexual Harassment Policy

## **#6 What Policies Must Contain**

**Presenter says:** Information detailed on this slide can be noted in going through each of the identified sections given with slide #5 or from the Appendixes.

## **#7 Safe Environment Program Training—Who Must Receive Training?**

**Presenter says:** Note that clergy, educators (schools and parishes), other staff employees and volunteers now receive the same basic two and one-half hour training. Children in pre-school through 6<sup>th</sup> grade have the program, “Personal Safety Awareness.” This may be done in 1-2-3 settings with a total time lasting around one hour. Youth in grades 7-12 have the program, “Creating Safe and Sacred Places” may be completed in about two and one-half hours over 1-2 settings. Some parishes/schools have modified programs for a middle school or junior high level. There is also about a two hour session for parents normally held two weeks prior to the first presentation to children/youth.

## **#8 Safe Environment Program—Background Investigations**

**Note to Presenters:** This slide is a follow-up to #4.

## **#9-20**

**Note to Presenters:** These slides were taken from the video presentations, Lamb/Woodbury, and should be reviewed by the trainer prior to group discussion.

**#21 *What to Look For: Signs of Abuse in Children***

**#22 *Important to Remember***

**Presenter says:** How do you recognize children who have been abused? It is not easy. So here are some signs and symptoms that you might notice in a child who is being abused. But the problem is that these signs and symptoms may also be related to other types of trauma, so you should not leap to the conclusion that abuse is occurring. However, if there is a child who is exhibiting some of these symptoms, that is a child you should keep an eye on, watch, and talk with to see if you can determine the cause of their distress, without asking “have you been abused?” We will talk about working with children who may be making a disclosure a little bit later.

**#23 *Grooming Children: Signs to Look for in Adult/Child Interaction***

**Presenter says:** We also want to educate you on what signs to look for in the behavior of someone who may be trying to engage children or youth in sexual activity. There is a type of behavior called grooming, and from studies that have been done, we know what types of behavior may be used by someone who is grooming a child for sexual abuse. There is a handout in your packet on the grooming process so that you can become familiar with these concepts, but some important things to be suspicious of, if you see this type of behavior, are listed on these slides.

First, look for behavior that singles out a particular child that involves inappropriate boundaries, like special gifts or special treatment. Not all behavior of this type is grooming, but if you see things like this happening, you can be cautious, watch the interactions, and be alert to anything that does not feel right. You can also use this information to draw the line on behavior which, while innocent, creates an atmosphere where someone who did want to hurt a child may be able to take advantage.

**Note to Presenters:** Refer to the grooming section of the packet, pages 19-20, for more information so that you are able to explain these slides to the participants. Caution that they should not overreact to the information, but just be aware).

**#24 *Reacting to Disclosure***

**Presenter says:** We also want to educate you on what your reaction should be if a child does disclose to you that he or she has been the victim of abuse. This is a critical time and your reaction can signal to the child whether it is okay to tell. If you have an emotional or angry reaction, that can signal for the child that they might have done something wrong in telling, and they will retract the disclosure. If you are too aggressive in seeking out the information, you could create a situation where the child may want to please you by answering questions in the way the child thinks you want them answered, and thus give you unintentionally false information. So this is an area where you should be very cautious, careful to keep within your role, which is to listen to the child and report the information to those who need to know so that further action can occur.

**Note to Presenters:** Pages 22-25 of your packet refer to disclosure. This is a good spot for an interactive discussion about the do’s and don’ts of responding to a disclosure. Two good video clips are found in the videos “Hear Their Cries” and “Bless the Children.” There is also a clip of a young child disclosing to a parent in “What do I Say Now?” These videos may be available at

your parish/school library but, if not, are available for checkout from the Diocesan Resource library. “Hear their Cries and “What Do I Say Now” are also available at five deanery sites including (St. Pius X—Deacon Gary McSwain; Our Lady of Lourdes—Shelley Dyer; St. Edwards—Deacon John McKinley; Holy Spirit—Kathy Barkdull; Idaho Falls Catholic Community—Deacon Rick Bonney.

## **#25 Reporting Abuse**

**Presenter says:** When you do receive a disclosure, it is also very important that you know what your obligations are under the law to report that disclosure. The law in Idaho is that anyone who has reason to believe that a child may be abused has a duty to report. You can report or cause to be reported. This means that your duty has been satisfied if you tell your youth minister coordinator, or your DRE, or your building principal or your pastor and they report it. However, if they do not report it then the primary responsibility for reporting is the individual to whom the disclosure was made.

**Note to Presenters:** Pages 27-30 refer to relevant Idaho Statutes. The key statement is found on page 30 (a) under **16-1619 Reporting of Abuse, Abandonment or Neglect.** Copies of the “Care Enough to Call” brochures are found on pages 30-31 of the packet. You can obtain free copies from the Idaho Care Line listed on the brochure, or you can print off copies from the Health and Welfare website at <http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/site/3333/default.aspx> Also, point out to participants the number they can call, and also note the fact that reports can be made anonymously. The important thing to remember is that they call to protect a child.

**Presenter says:** If the disclosure the child is making involves an alleged abuser that is working on behalf of the church, either an employee or a volunteer, you must also call the Diocesan Office of Child Youth and Adult Protection. The Director of that office is Dr. Bob Fontaine (208) 342-1311 Ext: 5155. Even if you call CPS or law enforcement, they may not take immediate action, and the diocese may want to take immediate action to assure that our programs are safe and that anyone who might abuse a child does not have access to our children.

**#26 Standards of Behavior**

**#27 Questionable Physical Touching**

**#28 Other Standards to Prevent Misconduct**

**#29 Other Standards of Behavior**

**#30 Other Standards**

**#31 Church Personnel Should: The Two Person Rule**

**Presenter says:** This information is also summarized in the Sexual Misconduct Policies manual noted previously under Section 1, 2.0—Standards of Behavior.

An additional document, “Guidelines for Supervision of Minors” will also soon be available on our website once cleared by legal counsel. This document further clarifies procedures for the use of offsite and overnight parish and Diocesan sponsored youth activities.

### **Closing:**

Thank all participants for joining you and assisting in efforts to make the parish/school a safer place for our children and youth.

Close with the “Prayer for Healing for Victims of Abuse” on page 38 of the packet.

Note that Certificates of Completion are available but be sure the following is completed before giving certificates:

- The attendance log is signed.
- Authorizations for background checks are completed (front and back) by all volunteers (parishes and schools) and by parish employees. **Completed authorizations are not necessary for employees of Catholic schools since they are cleared through the State of Idaho.**
- All participants have signed an acknowledgement form and have received the Sexual Misconduct policies (revised, March 26, 2007).
- Evaluation forms are provided for each participant.

## **IMPORTANT NOTE TO TRAINERS:**

**Immediately after the completion of each session, return the following information to the Diocesan Office of Child Youth and Adult Protection, 1501 Federal Way, Suite 400, Boise ID 83705.**

- 1. The Attendance Log**
- 2. Both background check forms for each participant**
- 3. The white copy of the Acknowledgement Form for each participant**
- 4. The evaluation forms**

**Thank you for all you do for the protection of our children!**

***Closing prayer***

**(You can create your own, or use this prayer)**

**Prayer for Healing  
for Victims of Abuse**

Praise to you, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
source of all consolation and hope.  
By your Son's dying and rising  
He remains our light in every darkness,  
our strength in every weakness.

Be the refuge and guardian  
of all who suffer from abuse and violence.  
Comfort them and send healing  
for their wounds of body, soul and spirit.

Rescue them from bitterness and shame  
and refresh them with your love.  
Heal the brokenness  
in all victims of abuse,  
and revive the spirits of all who lament this sin.

Help us to follow Jesus  
in drawing good from evil, life from death.  
Make us one with you in your love for justice  
as we deepen our respect for the dignity of every human life.

Giver of peace,  
make us one in celebrating your praise,  
both now and forever.           Amen.