

 VIRTUS[®]
Excellence
Builds
Trust

Protecting God's Children[®]

Participant Workbook (Version 4.0)



Session _____ Facilitator _____
Date _____ Location _____ Name _____

How to use this Participant Workbook:

Thank you for taking the time to attend this interactive workshop. Please note that any portions of this workbook with gray box backgrounds will directly relate to the group discussion components for the videos, and may be utilized for note taking. Your Facilitator will guide you through. In addition, there are tips, facts and reflection in the margins for later reference.

Every case discussed in the videos is based on a true story. The stories of the survivors and the offenders were shared to assist safe adults in recognizing concerning behavior and learning how to intervene in those situations where warranted.

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Video 1

A TIME TO PROTECT GOD'S CHILDREN™

Please take a few moments to answer the following questions on this page.

Group Discussion

#1 What are some of your reactions to the video?

#2 How did the abuse affect the victims?

#3 What are some reasons that children and youth don't tell anyone about being sexually abused?

#4 What did you learn about abusers?

#5 What are some safety concerns regarding young people, technology use and the Internet?



DID YOU KNOW?

1 out of 5 adult women & 1 out of 10 adult men say they were sexually abused as children.

Children are sexually victimized at a much higher rate than adults.

Only about 38% of children who have been sexually abused actually disclose about having been sexually abused.

Many survivors never disclose—ever.

The U.S. alone has an estimated 40 million adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse.



While everyone's healing journey is different, several factors impact the ability for survivors and families to heal from sexual abuse.

Survivors can and do heal from sexual abuse, and that recovery can be gravely impacted by several factors. Most importantly, you can be a part of that healing process for others by providing care and support!

DID YOU KNOW?

Approximately 90% of youth are abused by people they know (~30% of these children are abused by family, while ~60% are abused by others they know and trust).

Only ~10% of children are abused by strangers.



Personal Reflection

Have you considered how your facial expression, your tone and your body language will appear if a child trusts you enough to come to you with a situation of abuse?



Fewer than 5% of children's allegations are intentionally false.

Since children are overwhelmingly telling the truth when speaking about child sexual abuse, this means we must understand how to deal with disclosures!

Always provide youth with environments that are safe and supportive, letting them know that you will believe what they say.



Facts from the Video

FACT: Child abusers cannot be identified solely based on the way they look.

FACT: Most abusers are known and trusted by the victim—and the victim's family.

FACT: Most sex abusers are not homosexuals.

FACT: Celibate clergy are not more likely than others to abuse children.

FACT: Children rarely lie about sexual abuse.

Video 2

A PLAN TO PROTECT GOD'S CHILDREN™**STEP 1***Know the Warning Signs of Adults*

List some of the warning signs adults exhibit that could illustrate an inappropriate or concerning relationship with youth, which *could* also be part of the grooming process:

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While we may not always know someone's intentions, their behavior should speak for itself.

Keep in mind, if someone is exhibiting one or more warning signs of inappropriate or concerning behavior, it doesn't make them an abuser—but, it could be grooming and still must be addressed.

Your specific role in protecting children begins with knowing the warning signs of inappropriate behavior, and then having the courage to speak up when something is amiss.

Personal Reflection

We must acknowledge that our own behavior might be problematic or need attention. Safe adults cannot behave in ways that condition children to tolerate, or accept, inappropriate or boundary-violating behavior from others. Is there anything in your own behavior that could be improved to better uphold the boundaries of others, and especially children?



A good way for adults to guide interactions with youth to ensure that they are healthy and safe is to uphold the PACT:

Prioritize safety
 act **A**ppropriately*
Consistently follow the policies
 work **T**ogether

(*without the possibility of being perceived as sexual or romantic in nature)



STEP 2 *Screen and Select Employees and Volunteers*

This step involves all of the procedures we complete prior to (or at the onset of) our employment or volunteer roles.

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No one is “guaranteed” to work with, or care for, our children—it’s entrusted only to those adults who consistently demonstrate they can keep children protected and safe.

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Personal Reflection

Employees & 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 & Guardians

- What are some of the ways you presently control access to your child/youth?
- How do you select and screen babysitters or caretakers?
- 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?
- Do you present the same type of healthy caution toward friends and family, or do you assume they're safe adults?

STEP 3 Monitor All Environments, including Activities Involving Technology

Whether encountering youth in person through your organization, or communicating with them online, what are actions caring adults like you can do to monitor the environment and encourage healthy boundaries?

In-Person	Using Technology



You can be involved in identifying areas of strength and weakness in your environment!

It's important to know exactly who is running the program, what child protection safeguards are in place and what the procedures are for dropping in to observe.

You have a right to know how youth are being protected in any environment—the organization should be able to clearly outline the procedures and everyone should be working together. If this isn't the case, consider whether this is the best place for the youth in your care.

Personal Reflection



Employees & Volunteers

What could be done to improve the monitoring of any environment, online or in person?

Parents & 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?

How do you check in during these events?

How do your children contact you when they're uncomfortable, afraid or unsafe?

Do you "role play" scenarios with your children to give them helpful language?



STEP 4

Be Attentive to Children and Youth

This step is two-fold:

- **First**, we need to be attentive to concerning behavioral cues that children might exhibit when experiencing abuse.

Concerning behavioral cues children might exhibit:

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Although these behavioral red flags don't necessarily mean that a child is being abused, they are indicators that shouldn't be ignored.
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DID YOU KNOW?

Sometimes children may not be aware that they're allowed to say "no" to a behavior that makes them uncomfortable. They may make promises to their peers to keep secrets about safety in an attempt to protect them, without realizing this can be harmful, or that it's important to tell safe adults about unsafe situations.

Children may often make a statement or ask a question to "test the waters" and see how an adult reacts before fully disclosing abuse.

Children send out this "test balloon" question or statement that could easily be retracted based on how the adult reacts.

If the adult is sensitive and carefully answers calmly, it is an opportunity for the child to continue with a disclosure and get help.



Tips to start the conversation with children. Ask:

What is something that makes you feel really happy?	What is something that makes you feel sad or uncomfortable?
Who is a kid who you really like to spend time with? What about an adult?	Have you ever felt uncomfortable or unsafe with a person?
Big feelings are OK to have! Is there anything you've been wanting to share about your feelings?	Has anyone ever tried to make you, or a friend, keep an unsafe secret?
	Has anyone ever tried to touch your private parts?

- **Second**, while it is the primary responsibility of adults to protect children and youth, there are also elements we need to teach youth on how to partner with us for their safety when they aren't in our immediate care.

What we teach children and youth when advocating for their safety & boundaries:

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Personal Reflection

What if a child discloses abuse directly to me?

- Remain calm.
- Let them talk and listen carefully, in a patient, non-judgmental manner.
- Keep your body language and tone as relaxed as possible, and be open and ready to listen.
- Limit questioning.
- Let them know that you believe them.
- Tell them they are being very brave just by talking to you.
- Inform them it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing by telling a safe adult.
- Let them know what comes next. *(Outlined in Step 5)*



DID YOU KNOW?

When children share sexual content or images of themselves or others amongst smartphones, or over the Internet, it can continually be shared without their permission or knowledge.

It also contributes to the proliferation of child sexual abuse materials that revictimize the youth repeatedly—every time it's downloaded, every single time it's viewed. And, once it's shared, the kids can't get the video or images back.

Many children will deny having been abused or will even recant after telling. They're afraid of being blamed, they're afraid of being contradicted by a more influential person, they're afraid of what their parents, family, and friends may say. The molester may have even convinced them that they are at fault, but patient, non-judgmental listening will usually allow the story to come out.



STEP 5 *Communicate Your Concerns*

Communicate your concerns—especially when you see something that looks suspicious, questionable, inappropriate, unsafe, abusive or simply makes you feel uncomfortable. There are varying levels of communicating concerns, depending on the possible urgency and seriousness of what is observed or known.

The following examples include ways to communicate concerns:

▶ **IF YOU SEE OR HEAR OF A POTENTIAL WARNING SIGN OF INAPPROPRIATE ADULT BEHAVIOR:**

- Do not hesitate; speak to a supervisor right away.

NOTES:

▶ **IF YOU ARE AWARE OF THE SAME WARNING SIGN OR ANOTHER CONCERN, AFTER ALREADY SPEAKING WITH A SUPERVISOR:**

- Speak to a supervisor, again, or to another person responsible for the program or activity.
- Keep communicating your concerns to people in elevated positions of authority if nothing seems to be addressed or you aren't taken seriously.

NOTES:

▶ **IF YOU SUSPECT OR KNOW THAT A CHILD IS BEING, OR HAS BEEN, ABUSED (INCLUDING IF YOU AREN'T QUITE SURE!):**

- Contact the child protection agency in your state. You can find the phone number for a child abuse hotline through an Internet search or within phone directories.

NOTES:

▶ IF YOU *SUSPECT* OR KNOW THAT A CHILD IS BEING, OR HAS BEEN ABUSED BY SOMEONE IN YOUR ORGANIZATION:

- First contact civil authorities (such as the child abuse hotline for your state).
- Then, also notify an official designated by your organization’s policy.

NOTES:

▶ IF A CHILD IS IN IMMINENT DANGER OF ABUSE:

- Call 911 (or the police).

NOTES:

▶ IF YOUTH ARE BEING SEXUALLY EXPLOITED ONLINE:

- Make a report to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children’s CyberTipline, available 24 hours a day at: cybertipline.org
- You can also call the police.

NOTES:

DID YOU KNOW?

Having a *suspicion* of child abuse is more than a concern about an adult’s behavior—it means that you have observed or heard something that makes you believe or wonder whether abuse is occurring.

It’s our task as adults to report anything that causes us to suspect that a child is being or has been abused—especially if they *disclose* to us, or tell us about the abuse.

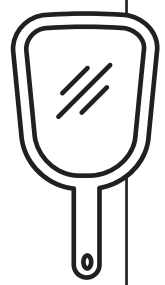
If something just doesn’t seem right, don’t overrule your initial instincts, and always err on the side of caution to protect the child. You may also need to report *again* depending on the circumstances.



Personal Reflection

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 and the community
- All** of the above
- Additional concerns:





Organization-Specific Safe Environment Notes:

This material will be presented by your facilitator.

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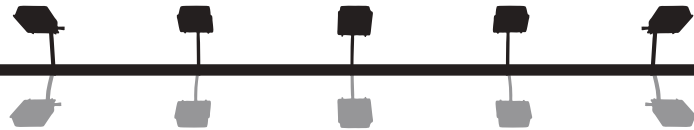
The goal here is to change the culture of silence to open discussion. Anyone who is thinking of abusing a child, to be sure, will have to consider the openness and willingness of our entire community to speak up and take action.

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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?
- 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 to help my environment to be a safe haven for children?



Are you a Safe Adult?

Safe Adults prioritize safety.

Thank you for making everywhere you go
a safer place for children.

Participant Workshop Survey (Protecting God's Children® 4.0)

We take your feedback seriously! Thank you for your time in attending this session.

Please complete this observation form to help us improve our sessions. Circle the answer that best applies:

Session location: _____ Facilitator's name: _____

Volunteer / Employee title or ministry: _____ Session date: _____

1. Was the subject content within the session generally what you expected?

Yes	No
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2. If you selected No above, what would have been helpful to you in preparation for the session?

3. Did the presentation provide new content to you that you didn't know about previously?

Yes	No
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4. Please indicate your level of understanding BEFORE the session:

	Very Low Knowledge	Low Knowledge	Somewhat Knowledgeable	Very Knowledgeable
a. My level of understanding of child sexual abuse	1	2	3	4
b. My level of understanding my role in protecting children	1	2	3	4
c. My level of understanding regarding my obligation to report	1	2	3	4
d. My level of understanding regarding how to report	1	2	3	4

5. Please indicate your level of understanding AFTER the session:

	Very Low Knowledge	Low Knowledge	Somewhat Knowledgeable	Very Knowledgeable
a. My level of understanding of child sexual abuse	1	2	3	4
b. My level of understanding my role in protecting children	1	2	3	4
c. My level of understanding regarding my obligation to report	1	2	3	4
d. My level of understanding regarding how to report	1	2	3	4

6. Did the handouts help you to better understand your role as a protector of children?

Yes	No	Not applicable (did not receive any)
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7. Please indicate your overall satisfaction with the following aspects of the session:

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
a. Ease of registration	1	2	3	4
b. Room	1	2	3	4

8. Please answer the following questions:

a. Was the facilitator knowledgeable about the subject matter?	Yes	No
b. Was the facilitator well organized / prepared?	Yes	No
c. Did the facilitator keep you engaged?	Yes	No
d. Was the facilitator professional?	Yes	No

9. Please answer the following questions:

	Not Likely	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
a. How likely are you to share what you learned with others?	1	2	3
b. How likely are you to call child protective services in the event you suspect child abuse?	1	2	3

10. Is there anything else about the session you'd like us to know? (Use the back of this page for more space)

What's next?

1. Did you register for this class? Each registrant must have an online registration for the *Protecting God's Children* Program to have a record of your participation. 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 <https://www.virtus.org>, select "First-Time Registrant" and follow the prompts. There will be a question during this process that will ask if you have already attended a *Protecting God's Children* session. If you have already attended, select "yes" and then select the session you attended from the list, which allows you to post-register.

If you have not yet attended a session, select "no" in order to pre-register yourself for an upcoming session. Please do not create multiple accounts in the system if you already have an existing account.

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 organization 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. You should receive an email after your attendance has been confirmed in your account.

3. Continue your training: Your diocese may request that you complete annual, ongoing training in order to be re-certified after your initial training. 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, school or coordinator to obtain more information about your location's ongoing training requirements.

Thank you for all that you do as protectors of children.



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Please check our website for new materials and content:

<https://www.virtus.org>