



DIOCESE OF SAN JOSE

OFFICE FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Dear Parish Catechetical Leaders and Youth Ministers,

Welcome to the 2023/2024 academic year! In accordance with the *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, the Diocese of San José will continue to present the **VIRTUS® Protecting God's Children 2.0** lessons as the designated youth safe environment program.

The lessons are organized in a three-year cycle so students receive the full range of information from the *Teaching Boundaries and Safety Guide* in small, “digestible” bites, over a three-year period. Last year we ended our first three-year cycle. This year represents Year 1 of the new cycle. Please read on for more information.

VIRTUS® Catholic Safe Environment Lessons (Year 1)

Prior to presenting the VIRTUS® Lessons to your class, please review the [Overview of the Teaching Safety Empowering God's Children™ Program \(Spanish\)](#) and the [Teaching Boundaries and Safety Guide \(Spanish\)](#) included in this packet.

The 2023/2024 academic year is **Year 1** of the three-year cycle. This year, you will be presenting:

- Lesson 1 - Physical Boundaries: Safe and Unsafe Touching Rules
- Lesson 2 - Safe Adults, Safe Touches and Special Safe Adults

To access the lesson plans, please visit [Parish VIRTUS Online Packet](#) and choose Lessons 1 & 2 for your age group (also available in Spanish). As always, please select one to two activities from each lesson to present to your students. Your parish may choose to present the lessons on separate days or as a combined lesson. Whenever possible, parents are invited to attend the VIRTUS Protecting God's Children lesson to encourage the continuation of safety conversations at home.

Sample Lesson Outline :

- Power to Protect 2.0 Introductory Video: 10 minutes
- Lesson 1- One or two activities of your choosing: 25-30 minutes
- Lesson 2- One or two activities of your choosing: 25-30 minutes
- Closing Prayer: 5 minutes



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Opt-Outs

Parental disclosure is critical to the success of this program. All families will be given the opportunity to opt-out of the VIRTUS® Catholic Safe Environment Curriculum. At least two weeks prior to the presentation, please distribute the [VIRTUS® Lesson- Letter to Family \(Spanish\)](#) and [Opt-Out Form \(Spanish\)](#). If students return an Opt-Out Form, please make alternative arrangements for those students during the VIRTUS lesson.

Documentation

Faith Formation Programs must complete and submit the [Parish VIRTUS Audit Reporting Form](#). The audit form asks for four key pieces of data: total number of students enrolled in faith formation program (K-12), total number of students who received VIRTUS lesson, total number of students who opt-out, and total number of students who were absent. Please note that opt-out students and absent students are reported separately.

Please submit the [Parish VIRTUS Audit Reporting Form](#) no later than **April 30th, 2024.**

Youth Volunteers

To be eligible to volunteer at a parish or Catholic school, students up to thirteen-years-old must complete the *VIRTUS® Protecting God's Children* lesson and review the Diocesan Youth Code of Conduct (available [English](#) and in [Spanish](#)).

To be eligible to volunteer at a parish or Catholic school, high school students - 9th grade up to their 18th birthday - will need to complete the *VIRTUS® Healthy Relationships for Teens 2.0* training available at www.virtusonline.org ([Teen Registration Instructions](#)). The training must be renewed every two years.

Questions?

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Griselda Cervantez, Victim Assistance & Safe Environment Program Coordinator, via email Griselda.Cervantez@dsj.org or by phone at 408-983-0225.

The Office for the Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults thanks you for your continued partnership in maintaining a safe environment for our most vulnerable.