



SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN: TEN YEARS OF HARD-EARNED KNOWLEDGE

By Bernard Nojadera (excerpt)

With 2012, the Catholic Church looks back on a decade of learning about a problem which may be decades of centuries old: the sexual abuse of minors by those who would mentor them.

Some of what we've learned:

- The guiding principle when confronting child sexual abuse is to remember that it is most of all about the person who was abused.
- People can learn. In the ten years since establishment of the *Charter* we have moved from disbelief to action.
- Child sexual abuse is a reality society must confront. No institution is immune from it. Learning to respond to the victim of abuse is the first job of any institution, community or family.
- Child sexual abuse is a hard topic to discuss, but training adults to protect children has given the topic a forum where the uncomfortable reality can be discussed.

Read the entire article at:

<http://usccbmedia.blogspot.com/2011/12/sexual-abuse-of-children-ten-years-of.html>

VIRTUS NEW FACILITATOR TRAINING SCHEDULED

The yearly VIRTUS New Facilitator training will be held:

March 22nd 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM & March 23rd 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM.

Lunch and all materials will be provided. There is no cost for this training.

To be eligible for training, applicant needs to:

- ◆ Be affiliated with an Archdiocesan parish or school and have already attended a VIRTUS session.
- ◆ Complete registration form and have all paperwork to the PCYI office by February 24, 2012
- ◆ Obtain a letter of reference from the pastor or canonical administrator of the parish or school where the trainee applicant volunteers or works, and verification from the parish or school of background check having been completed.
- ◆ Read, sign, and return the Archdiocese's Volunteer Code of Conduct form to the PCYI office; and -
- ◆ Be able to attend the entire two days of training.

IN THIS ISSUE

Page 1

- Sexual Abuse of Children: Ten Years of Hard-Earned Knowledge
- VIRTUS Facilitator Training Scheduled

Page 2

- Recently Seen on VIRTUS Website: What Makes a Friend?
- Netsmartz a Valuable Resource
- Tips for Local Coordinators
- Tips for Facilitators

REMINDER

Summary Parent 'Opt Out' forms Now Being Accepted

- Leaders need to complete the summary opt-out form within 2 weeks of finishing PCYI children/youth lessons for the program year if any children were formally opted out of PCYI lessons.
- Materials and a letter from Archbishop Nienstedt will be mailed to leaders for distribution beginning mid-February.
- The summary form may be found online at:
<http://www.archspm.org/resources/for-ms-detail.php?intResourceID=1662>
- You may also print, then complete and fax or mail to:
PCYI
328 Kellogg Blvd
St. Paul, MN 55102
FAX: 651-290-1628

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE HERE?

If you find a relevant article to share, discover a helpful solution for PCYI concerns, or have a topic you would like addressed here, please email us:

PCYI@archspm.org

RECENTLY SEEN ON THE VIRTUS WEBSITE: "WHAT MAKES A FRIEND?"

We are finding the three article series "What Makes a Friend?" recently published on the VIRTUS website to be especially helpful. If you are looking for information to share with parents, we encourage you to consider using this series.

The author, Erika Tyner Allen, approaches the subject of friendship from three perspectives: the essential traits of good friendship and how to be a good friend, mistakes children may make with regard to friendship, and helping parents understand that being their child's friend is not necessarily good parenting.

Some talking points in the series are: friends seek mutual respect and affection, popularity does not equal sociability, the potential danger of media as a 'perfect friend', and parents' responsibility to make tough choices and model good adult behavior. The author offers practical suggestions for talking to children and relevant reminders for adults to consider when interacting with children and observing children's interaction.

You can find the series on the Library tab of the VIRTUS website. The third article is set to be featured on February 6, 2012.

NETSMARTZ AN EXCELLENT RESOURCE

If you find yourself wondering "How can I possibly stay ahead of the tangle of technology the teens, 'tweens or tykes take up?" check out NetSmartz Workshop at: www.netsmartz.org.

You will also find valuable information for parents and other adults, plus, activities for youth and children.

For example, the article found at: http://cdn.netsmartz.org/tipsheets/social_networking_tips_parents.pdf provides tips to Social Networking for Parents. This article will be included in the 'Opt-Out' packet mailed this year. (see Reminder on page 1 of this bulletin)

FOR LOCAL COORDINATORS: TIPS TO PREPARE FOR THE SPRING AUDIT

- Review the files for all active Volunteers, Educators and Employees for PCYI Essential 3.
- Ensure these Safe Environment records are held in a secure place with controlled and locked access, but separate from personnel records. For example: locking file cabinet, closet, or cupboard in a locked room.
- Separate records for individuals who are no longer active Volunteers, Educators or Employees from those currently serving. Do not throw them away until 4 years have passed.
- Place them in a separate folder in the same file cabinet for example.
- Get Codes of Conduct updated as required. These must be signed every year.
- Schedule VIRTUS training if needed; partner with neighboring parish/school if practical.
- Submit Background checks if needed.
 - ◆ Remember, if a volunteer becomes an employee, an employee background check is required.
 - ◆ If background check was performed by another school/parish within the past year, you must have a release from the individual signed (form 8 for Volunteers, form I for Employees). If the check was run more than one year ago, you must submit for a background check.
 - ◆ Be sure to review all results of background checks.

FOR FACILITATORS: TIPS TO ENCOURAGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Change your position in the room for discussion. Participants will learn that when you are in this position they are expected to speak.
- For discussion, break the distance between your lecture position and the participants.
- When a participant speaks, move to another table to visually encourage them to respond to the speaker.
- While you are waiting for a response to your discussion question, walk toward the group until you are in their midst.
- After asking a discussion question, make eye contact with a participant to encourage him or her to respond.
- As participants leave for a break, individually thank or praise those who contributed.
- If you ask a discussion question and you don't get a response, move to another spot in the room and rephrase the question.
- During small group discussions, move around the room to get a sense of when to move on and to answer questions.
- Show the participants with gestures and body language that you are connected to what they are saying. A simple hand gesture can say "great comment;" a facial expression can encourage a speaker to dig deeper; or a body stance can tell the group that you are reflecting on a particularly important point.