



What are Safe Environment Programs?

In 2003, the USCCB's Office of Child and Youth Protection called for the implementation of safe environment programs in all arch/dioceses and eparchies, as mandated by the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. Safe environment programs must include the following:

- A **written code of conduct** for all employees and those volunteers who work with young people. This is signed at the time the initial Safe Environment training is completed and is renewed on a three year cycle for all continuing employees and volunteers.
- **Training programs for adults** whose duties include ongoing, unsupervised contact with minors (such as parents, ministers, volunteers, educators, and church personnel); training should include materials on prevention, identification, and response and reporting of abuse. Training is renewed on a three year cycle and beginning with the fall of 2012, includes material on Bullying and Cyber Safety.
- **Training programs for children and young people** that includes material on personal safety. In the Diocese of Fresno, training is done yearly with our own "*Catholic Safe Environment Curriculum*" materials for all children and youth enrolled in a parish religious education program and for all students at our diocesan K-12th grade Catholic schools.
- **Background checks conducted through fingerprint clearance** of all personnel and volunteers who have regular contact with minors.

Safe environment programs may also include the following:

- **Methods for outreach to parents**, including formal training sessions, independent reading material, videos, and/or information on the diocesan website
- A commitment to incorporate the safe environment program into the **long-term, ongoing mission of the diocese**

"To create a safe environment for children is of paramount importance for the Church, and everyone in the church is responsible for ensuring that this exists. No one can say, 'it's not my job.'"

**Teresa M. Kettlekamp, Former Executive Director
Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection**