



*"They shall make a sanctuary for me, that
I may dwell in their midst." Exodus 25:8*

Safe Environment Program

Ministers' Handbook

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CODE OF CONDUCT

TRAINING INFORMATION

RESOURCE MATERIAL

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

November 2009

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Catholic Parish

22508 Copper Hill Drive, Santa Clarita CA 91350-4299

Rev. Msgr. Michael J. Slattery, Pastor
Rev. Blaise N. Brockman, Administrator
Edward & Kathleen Littleton, Deacon Couple
Jay Reiser, Deacon

Parish Office: (661) 296-3180

Fax: (661) 296-7854

Hours: Mon 1:30 – 5:00 pm

Tues-Fri 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Parish Website: www.blessedkateriparish.org.

Safe Environment Chairs: Michael Dermody and Susan Kipper

Parish Manager: Renée Fields (661) 296-3180 x2452

Religious Education Office: (661) 296-6945

Bobby Vidal, x7909

Director of Evangelization and Lay Formation

Confirmation Office: x7908

Youth Ministry Office: x7918

Part One INTRODUCTION

We, who have been given the responsibility of shepherding God's people, will, with God's help and in full collaboration with our people, continue to work to restore the bonds of trust that unite us. Words alone cannot accomplish this goal. It will begin with the actions we take here in our General Assembly and at home in our dioceses/eparchies

*Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*

Why should our parish have a “Safe Environment” Program?

The parish of Blessed Kateri is initiating this program to provide for a safe environment in all of parish activities. By reducing the risk of child abuse, we want to create a safe environment for all who participate in our parish ministry; we want to reduce the chance that Clergy, Employees, and volunteers might face false accusations, and we want to have the parish community feel more confident in the ability of the parish to protect children.

The key aspects of this program is to be SAFE

- ***S**creening
- ***A**ppropriate training
- ***F**air procedures
- ***E**ducation

Who needs to be SAFE?

This program will apply to all clergy, employees, volunteers, and ministers who work with children, or who may come in contact with children. This will include, but is not limited to, the following:

- All Clergy;
- All paid staff members;
- Religious Education volunteers; and
- Members of other youth-oriented ministries, or ministries that may have contact with youth. Examples of these ministries would include:

Altar Servers
Babysitting Co-op
Confirmation
Couples for Christ
Eucharistic Ministers
Family Support & Mental Health
Greeters
Health Ministry
Lectors
Life Teen
Little Church

Knights of Columbus
Music Ministry
Sacristans
Scouting
Ushers

In addition, other groups that work with youth and indicate that they are affiliated with Blessed Kateri Parish, or groups who use the Blessed Kateri Parish facilities, are expected to follow these guidelines as well.

Volunteers and youth “ministry aides” who are between 13 and 17 years of age may be permitted to assist in group activities. They do not have to be screened. However, since they are not considered adults, they do not satisfy the 2-deep adult leadership role. These youth ministry aides must be supervised at all times, and they can never supervise a child or children alone.

WHO WILL COORDINATE THE PROCESS OF BEING SAFE?

The pastor will appoint a “Safe Environment Committee”. This committee will be broad based among the various parish ministries. The committee will meet on a quarterly basis, or more frequently if deemed necessary.

The key functions of the committee will be to implement the Safe Environment Program (SEP) by:

- Reviewing the SEP and, as appropriate, suggest changes;
- Approve alternate screening processes;
- Approve training/education programs to be used by various ministries in the SEP.
- Provide ongoing education to the parish community at large.

Part Two

WHAT IS THE SCREENING PROCESS?

All staff and volunteers must be screened prior to working in a ministry where there is contact with children. Individual ministries may develop their own additional procedures for screening; however, such processes must include the minimum that are detailed below.

1. Application

An application will be provided for every prospective staff member or volunteer who will be in a ministry or activity where there is an opportunity for child contact.

This application will include a copy of the SEP. Individuals will need to sign the copy, acknowledging that they have read and understand the requirements of the SEP.

2. Reference Checks and Interviews

2.a General Reference Checks:

These procedures apply to the following individuals:

- Registered in the parish for 6 months,
- Well-known by parish leaders;
- Ordained clergy, seminarians, deacons in formation classes, religious sisters

1. All prospective staff or volunteers will need to submit a list of at least three references.
2. There must be a general interview by the leader of that particular ministry, or his/her approved designee.

2.b Comprehensive Reference Check

These procedures apply to all individuals who do not qualify for the general reference check:

1. All prospective employees or volunteers will need to submit a list of at least three references. The appropriate ministry leader or designee will contact the references, and make a written record of each reference check.,
2. The leader of that particular ministry will conduct an interview. There will be a written record of that interview.

3. Criminal Background Check

All prospective staff and volunteers will be required to submit to a criminal background check. The results of the criminal background check will be reported as CLEAR or NOT clear (the specific offence for disqualification will not be reported). This information will be sent to the Director of Human Resources, Archdiocese of Los Angeles, who will report the results to the Pastor and the ministry leader, as appropriate.

Background checks from Religious Ed teachers will be sent to the Religious Education Director.

All results from the criminal background check must be kept in the strictest confidence.

4. Training class.

Each staff or volunteer must complete an educational training program within three months of having been accepted to serve in a position at Blessed Kateri. The SEP committee will provide an update list of appropriate classes.

Each staff member or volunteer will be required to undergo a training class once every three years, unless VIRTUS.org training bulletins are read as requested (registration with VIRTUS.org required).

5. Disqualifying offenses

No person may serve with children if they have been convicted of a disqualifying offense, or if they were on probation for any disqualifying offense, or is pending any criminal charges of a disqualifying offense.

Disqualifying offenses include:

- A felony or misdemeanor classified by California State law as an offense against the person or family, or involving an offense against the person or family. (e.g., murder, assault, sexual assault, child abandonment, child endangerment, incest, harboring a runaway child)
- A felony or misdemeanor classified as an offense against public order or indecency. (e.g., prostitution, sexual performance by a child, possession or promotion of child pornography, disorderly conduct)
- A felony or misdemeanor involving the possession, manufacture, distribution, or intent to distribute a controlled substance.

6. Appeals process:

Any individual who has not been accepted, or who has been released for violating a provision of the SEP, will have the right to appeal.

For non-acceptance based on criminal background check:

The applicant shall be given the name and address of the contractor providing the criminal background check so that he or she will have the opportunity to obtain a similar report. If there are any changes to the report, the applicant may request a second criminal background check that may, at the discretion of the parish, be reconsidered.

For non-acceptance based on the interview or other factors:

The applicant, upon written request, shall have the right to a second interview and reconsideration of his or her application by the appeals committee. The reconsideration must take place within three months since the application was denied.

For release as a result of failing to abide by the regulations of the SEP:

The individual, upon written request, shall have the right to be reconsidered as a staff member or volunteer by the appeals committee. The reconsideration must take place within three months since the individual was released from service.

The appeals committee shall consist of three individuals, representing the clergy, ministry leadership, and the SEP committee. In general, the appeals committee will consist of the Pastor, director of the ministry involved, and the Chair of the SEP committee. If appropriate, the pastor may appoint a designee for any of the three members.

All reconsideration decisions must be made by a majority vote of the appeals committee, and are to be considered FINAL.

7. Confidentiality

Any and all information obtained through the SEP process (i.e., screening form, application, reference information, criminal background check, etc.) must be kept in the strictest confidence.

Any documents will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the Parish of Religious Education offices, and restricted to those who have a legitimate “need to know.” Any such documents will be destroyed (shredded) three years after a staff member leaves Blessed Kateri, or three years after a volunteer ceases his/her volunteer duties.

Part Three

What is the SEP Code of Conduct?

Two-deep leadership

For all scheduled events, there will be at least two adults present with the children and youth at all times. Both adults must be screened, approved, and trained through the procedures established by the SEP. Teen aged Ministry Aides do not count toward satisfying the two-deep leadership rule.

If, for reasons due to illness, absence, or emergency situations, there are not two cleared adults, backup measures must be implemented. This could include temporarily assigning an adult who has not been fingerprinted and trained or merging of two smaller groups to form one larger group that can provide the two-deep leadership.

If it is impossible to provide two-deep leadership, the event must be cancelled.

The two-deep leadership rule applies to ALL activities and events of parish ministries that involve children, except in the following circumstances:

- Classroom teaching during established Religious Education classes;
- Confessions;
- Counseling. However, when counseling is needed, it should be done privately but in view of other adults and children.

General Guidelines for working with children

1. Do not provide any child with alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, or any other restricted or controlled substance.
2. Do not serve as chaperones for activities that conflict with curfew laws pertaining to minors.
3. Touching should be age-appropriate and based on the needs of the minor, and not the needs of the adult. Avoid physical contact when alone with a minor (under the two-deep leadership rule you should NEVER be alone with a minor).
4. Do not engage in physical discipline of a minor. Discipline problems should be handled in coordination with the ministry supervisor and/or the parents of the child.
5. Do not be with a minor in a residence, sleeping facility, locker room, rest room, dressing facility, or other closed room or isolated area that is inappropriate to a ministry relationship.
6. Topics, vocabulary, recording, films, games, or the use of computer software or any other forms of personal interaction or entertainment that could not be used comfortably in the presence of parents should not be employed with minors.
7. Sexually explicit material or pornography is never appropriate.
8. Hazing is prohibited. Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any parish activity.

9. No child should be left alone at the end of any activity. Two adult leaders must remain until every child has been picked up.
10. Parents are always welcome at any activity which involves their children.

Additional Archdiocesan guidelines:

11. **All adults working or volunteering with minors are accountable to follow all policies contained in ministry Handbooks.** All adults acting in a staff, faculty, ministerial or other paid or volunteer* position in the Archdiocese are role models who are called to treat each minor with respect and care. Staff members/faculty/volunteers serving either in a paid or volunteer position need to maintain professional relationships with minors whether on or off the parish or parish school locations.
 12. Staff members/faculty/volunteers will ensure that minors are properly supervised at all times, thus providing them a safe environment. Minors must be viewed as “restricted individuals” because they are not adults and are not independent.
 13. If staff members/faculty/volunteers who are supervising minors observe a situation where civil law, parish and/or school rules are being violated, they must take appropriate action immediately.
 14. Staff members/faculty/volunteers should always be aware they have considerable personal power because of their ministerial positions. Therefore, they will maintain respectful ministerial relationships, avoiding manipulation and other abuses of power.
 15. Staff members/faculty/volunteers must avoid assuming the role of a “father or mother figure,” which may create an excessive emotional attachment for all parties.
 16. Attraction between adults and minors is possible, and care and caution should be taken in all interactions. The parish/school administration should be informed immediately if such an attraction exists. Dating or sexual relationships between a staff member/faculty/volunteer and a minor are inappropriate and unethical. Dating or sexual relationships between a staff member/faculty/volunteer and a minor are unlawful.
 17. Communications with minors (e.g., notes, letters, e-mail and Internet exchanges, telephone calls) must be for professional reasons only.
 18. Discussions of a sexual nature must always take place in an appropriate educational context. Sexual jokes, slang or innuendo are inappropriate when interacting with minors.
 19. Staff members/faculty/volunteers will respect confidential information concerning minors or confidential information of a personal nature shared by a minor. However, if a minor shares confidential information that could pose a threat to the minor or to others, the staff member/faculty/volunteer has an obligation to notify the proper authorities.
 20. When staff members/faculty/volunteers are supervising minors or young adults at parish or parish school-sponsored activities, they may not be under the influence of alcohol, may not consume alcohol in the presence of persons under age 21, nor offer alcohol to them.
-

21. When a staff member/faculty/volunteer is alone in a room with a minor, the door must be open, or there must be clear visibility through windows.
22. Staff members/faculty/volunteers are to engage in games or sports activities with minors only in the presence of other adults, or in a place openly accessible/visible to others.
23. Staff members/faculty/volunteers planning parish/parish school events in their homes must have the permission of the parish/school administration. In addition, staff members/faculty/volunteers may not have minors in their homes without parental and parish/school administration permission.
24. Staff members/faculty/volunteers may not drive minors unless it is to or from a parish/parish school-sponsored activity and may never drive alone with a minor. Driving minors requires parental permission slips that indicate the transportation is by personal vehicle. The parish/parish school administration must approve any use of personal vehicles. Trips involving minors must have a sufficient number of adult chaperones and minors to preclude the appearance of inappropriate personal involvement with minors.
25. Parent/guardian written permission is required for the publication of a picture of a minor.
26. Adults are permitted to interact alone with minor(s) only after complying with Archdiocesan policies regarding fingerprinting and safe environment training. They may work with minors only as part of a team if they have not fulfilled the requirements.

Revised August 20, 2007

SPECIAL RULES FOR TRANSPORTATION

These rules apply if children are being transported to an off-site location as a group. They do not apply when children are transported and picked up by their own parents.

1. For all off-site activities, parents will be given an information/permission sheet that lists
 - a) The location and general goal of the activity;
 - b) Place and time for departure;
 - c) Place and time for arrival back at Blessed Kateri;
 - d) Emergency contact numbers for the parents.
2. No child will be allowed to go on any off-site activity if the parent has not returned a signed acknowledgment of receiving the information/permission sheet.
3. All parents will be made aware of the departure spot, the location of the event, and the designated pick-up spot.
4. All participants will meet for departure at a designated area. The activity will leave as a group, and will not leave "stragglers" behind to catch up.
5. When traveling a long distance, prearrange a schedule for periodic checkpoint stops as a group.
6. A common departure site and a daily destination point are a must. If you cannot provide two adults for each vehicle, the minimum required is one adult and two or more youth members—never one on one.
7. All drivers must meet be qualified, licensed and insured as required by the California Motor Code. Every passenger must use a seatbelt if transported in private automobiles. Trucks and trailers will

be used only for transporting supplies and equipments – passengers are never to be transported in trailers or the beds of pickup trucks..

SPECIAL RULES FOR OVERNIGHT EVENTS

Occasionally there are ministerial reasons for overnight activities (i.e., retreats, scout camping, etc.). Special concern should be exercised in these events to ensure that SEP guidelines are satisfied.

1. All adult leadership for overnight activities must be approved in advance by the leadership of that respective ministry.
2. It is preferred that, on off-property events, that there are four adults present.. In case of an emergency, two adults may accompany a minor to a hospital, while the other two adults remain with the rest of the group.
3. Never sleep in the same bed as a minor.
4. If camping, no youth is permitted to sleep in the tent of an adult other than his own parent or guardian
5. For single-room/dormitory-type accommodations, adults and youth of the same gender may occupy dormitory/single-room accommodations, provided there is a minimum of two adults (one of whom has been screened through the SEP procedures) and four youth. Adults must establish separation barriers or privacy zones such as a temporary blanket or sheet walls in order to keep their sleeping area and dressing area separated from the youth area
6. Respect the privacy of youth, especially in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers. If you must intrude, do so only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations.
7. If at all possible, there should be separate shower and latrine facilities for males and female. When separate facilities are not available, separate times for male and female use should be scheduled and posted.
8. Male and female leaders must have separate sleeping facilities. Married couples may share the same quarters if appropriate facilities are available and if no youth (other than their own children) are present.
9. Male and female youth participants will not share the same sleeping facility.
10. Children should be instructed on the importance of the “buddy system”.

Part Four

WHAT ARE MY REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES?

Who needs to report Child Abuse?

Everyone who works with youth at the parish should be aware of what constitutes child abuse, and what should be done if child abuse is suspected. A few key guidelines should guide all of us:

1. The concern of the child is paramount
2. Your responsibility is to report, NOT INVESTIGATE
3. If you make a report in good faith (i.e., you are not making a report that you know to be false), you are not liable for any criminal or civil liability.
4. Making a report does not necessarily mean that any criminal or civil proceedings will be automatically brought against a suspected abuser.

What is a Mandated Reporter?

While everyone should report suspected cases of child abuse, there are certain groups of individuals who are considered “Mandated Reporters”. These individuals MUST report suspected cases of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to make such reports opens these individuals up to potential criminal and civil liabilities.

Who would be a mandated reporter here at Blessed Kateri?

According to the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANR), members of the clergy and “Child Care Custodians” (among others) are considered mandatory reporters. But what exactly is a “Child Care Custodian”? According to CANR, the following are among those who are considered “child care custodian”

- Employed teacher
- Employed teachers aid
- Day camp employee
- Youth center employee
- Youth recreation program employee
- Youth organization employee
- Employee with direct contact with children

Although the CANR does not consider volunteers as mandated reporters, at Blessed Kateri we expect any volunteer with a suspicion of a possible child abuse situation to report it to the appropriate authority.

Why should I make a report?

The primary reason is to protect the child. However, making a report can also help protect other children, and can even help abusive parents or other adults.

If a set of circumstances is not recognized, or an environment is not made safe, other children could suffer.

In some cases, changes in family circumstances and environment could be improved by making a report.

What is I'm not sure? It might be abuse...but then it might not be.

For reporting cases of suspected child abuse, the law does not state that you must have absolute certainty. You should report a case only if you SUSPECT that there might be potential child abuse.

Should I investigate before I make any report?

NO! Do not investigate. You are only required to report suspicions. Let professionals in Law Enforcement decide whether or not any investigation should take place.

How do I make a report?

Anyone who suspects the possibility of child abuse by any staff or volunteer affiliated with Blessed Kateri should report to the Pastor (Rev. Msgr. Michael Slattery), Administrator (Rev. Blaise Brockman), or the Chair of the SEP committee (Mr. Michael Dermody).

The Pastor or SEP Chair should make a telephone contact to the Sheriff's department as soon as possible, and submit a written report within 36 hours. (Use DOJ form SS 8572). Copies of this form should be submitted to:

- Sheriff (original 4-part form)
- Pastor of Blessed Kateri (copy)
- Archdiocese of Los Angeles (copy)

What information should I report?

Be sure to provide the following information when making a report of a suspected child abuse incident:

- Name, and if possible address, of child alleging abuse
- Description of alleged abuse
- Location of alleged abuse
- Source of information

If I make a report will my name be mentioned?

In general, under the CANR, the name of any individual who makes a report of a suspected incident of child may be confidential.

What if the press contacts me? Can I make a statement about the alleged incident?

The ONLY person authorized to speak to the media is the pastor of Blessed Kateri. To protect the privacy of all involved, any requests for information should be directed to the Pastor.

Part Five

WHAT ARE SOME SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE?

Adapted from *Youth Protection Guidelines Questions and Answers*, Boy Scouts of America

What is child abuse?

Generally speaking, child abuse is injury of a child by an adult or older child that might not be intentional, but is not accidental. It is usually classified as physical abuse, emotional abuse, or sexual abuse. Harm caused by withholding life's necessities-food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education-is called neglect.

How can I tell if a child has been abused?

Each child reacts to abuse differently. In physical abuse, injuries to the child might be evident, but with any kind of abuse, children often give only behavioral clues. You should be alert to changes in the child's behavior. Any abrupt change in behavior that is maintained for a week or longer is a sign that the child is experiencing stress that could stem from a variety of causes-including child abuse. If you notice this kind of change in behavior, you should consider seeking help for the child. Some of the specific signs for each kind of abuse are listed below:

What are signs of physical abuse?

A child who has been physically abused might exhibit suspicious injuries. These injuries are different from those normally associated with childhood "wear and tear."

Burns. Burns that might indicate a child has been abused include cigarette or cigar burns on the soles of the feet, the palms of the hands, the back, or the genital areas. Other burns associated with abuse are friction or tether burns on the wrists, ankles, or around the neck caused by ropes used to tie the child. Wet burns on the hands and feet that appear to be glove like or sock-like are caused by forcing the child to bathe in water that is too hot. Dry burns leave distinctive marks in the shape of the instrument used to inflict them. Commonly, in child abuse cases, these include electric irons, radiator grates, and stove burners.

Bruise: Bruises of different colors, indicating infliction at different times and in different stages of healing, often indicate abuse. This is particularly true if the bruises are on the abdomen, back, or face. Bruises, like burns, also might have distinctive shapes indicating the weapon used to inflict them.

Lacerations and abrasions: Children often have scraped knees, shins, palms, or elbows-predictable injuries. When children have lacerations and abrasions in soft tissue areas, such as on the abdomen, back, backs of arms and legs, or external genitalia, it is a strong indicator of physical abuse. Human bite marks, especially when they are recurrent and appear to be adult-sized, are also strongly indicative of abuse.

Fractures: Unexplained fractures are cause for concern. A child with multiple fractures is almost certain to be a victim of abuse. Other signs include swollen or tender limbs and spiral fractures caused by jerking of the arms.

What are signs of Emotional Abuse?

The indicators of emotional abuse are hard to detect. Some visible signs are lagging physical development and habit disorders such as thumb sucking or rocking.

Is Stress a potential sign of abuse?

Children who have been physically abused also are likely to show signs of childhood stress. Childhood stress can result from any upsetting situation in the child's environment such as family disruption, death of a pet, or even a move to a new neighborhood. It can also be a result of child abuse. If a child abruptly changes his behavior for more than a few days in a manner that you feel is inappropriate, you might want to ask the child if something is wrong or if you can help. Do not immediately jump to the conclusion that the child has been abused.

What are signs of Neglect?

As with emotional abuse, the signs of neglect are usually very subtle and hard to detect. A neglected child might show up at activities inappropriately dressed, lacking in personal hygiene, and consistently hungry.

What are signs of Sexual Abuse?

Perhaps the best evidence that a child has been sexually abused is that the abuse is witnessed-if not by you, then by another individual. Another excellent indication is that the child says that he has been abused. Again, oftentimes this information may not come from the child himself but from another source.

Physical evidence of sexual abuse, if present at all, tends to be temporary. These signs include:

- Difficulty in walking;
- Torn, stained, or bloody underwear;
- Pain or itching in the genital area;
- Bruises or bleeding of the external genitalia; and
- Sexually transmitted diseases.

Behavioral signs of sexual abuse are likely to be more conspicuous and present longer. Specific behaviors related to child sexual abuse include:

- Age inappropriate understanding of sex;
- Reluctance to be left alone with a particular person;
- Persistent and inappropriate sex play with peers or toys;
- Prostitution;
- Wearing lots of clothing, especially to bed;
- Drawings of genitalia;
- Fear of touch;
- Abuse of animals;
- Masturbation in public;
- Nightmares or night terrors;
- Apprehension when the subject of sexual abuse is brought up; and
- Cross-dressing

The presence of any of these behaviors indicates a possibility that sexual abuse has occurred. They are not, in and of themselves, conclusive evidence that the child has been abused.

What should I do if I notice any of these signs?

First, you should not jump to any conclusions. The signs of child abuse are often ambiguous; they can mean something other than child abuse.

Consider stating your observations to the child's parents. For example, you could say, "For the past two weeks, Johnny has been very disruptive. He is very aggressive with the other children and uses foul language. This behavior is very unlike him. I hope that everything is okay."

You should not make any accusations to the parents that the child is being abused. Even if you file a report with the parish or the authorities because you suspect child abuse, you should not make accusations or state your suspicions to others who are not responsible for determining if abuse is occurring.

What should I do if I suspect that a child is being abused?

If you suspect or hear that a child in a parish program is being abused, you must contact the pastor or SEP Chair. He will be able to tell you what you should do. He will also tell you that he must contact the appropriate authorities and report your suspicions to them.

If you suspect that a child who is not in a parish ministry is being abused, you should contact your local child abuse hot line. Generally the telephone number to report child abuse is listed in the white pages under "child abuse."

What if I am not sure that the child is being abused?

The law requires only that you have a reasonable suspicion that a child is being abused. Once a report has been made, the appropriate agency will investigate and determine if abuse can be substantiated. Unless you make a report, the child might remain in grave danger.

How can I tell if a person is a child molester?

Child molesters, individuals who sexually abuse children, do not fit the common stereotypes that we hold, i.e., strangers, dirty old men, mentally disabled, etc.

There is no test or other screening mechanism that will identify a child molester prior to committing an offense.

Child molesters come from all walks of life, all social and ethnic groups, and all occupational categories. Child molesters might have positions of prominence in their communities.

The vast majority of molesters are known by the children they victimize and might have a position of authority over children, such as a teacher, clergy member, youth group worker, or police officer.

How can we protect our children from child molesters?

Child molesters often try to gain access to children through legitimate means such as becoming involved in youth activities. They use this access to identify children who they perceive to be vulnerable to sexual abuse.

To protect our children, we must establish and maintain open lines of communication so that they feel free to report any inappropriate or worrisome contact with adults or older children. We also must educate our children to enable them to understand what abuse is and that they have the right to resist any offensive contact.

Part Six

HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO THE CHILD?

Adapted from *Safe Environment Program, St. Pius X Parish, Diocese of Dallas*

In addition to reporting child abuse to the appropriate parish and state authorities, the question arises how you should respond to the child. Although this is the last section of this booklet, it is part of our primary concern – the support and care for the child.

How might a child disclose abuse?

Children may disclose abuse in a variety of ways. They may come to you in private, and tell you directly and specifically what is going on: unfortunately, this is one of the less common ways for children to disclose. Ways that are more common include:

Indirect hints

- "My brother wouldn't let me sleep last night."
- "Mr. Jones wears funny underwear"
- "Daddy doesn't like me."
- "My baby-sitter keeps bothering me."

A child may talk in these terms because she/he hasn't learned more specific vocabulary, feels too ashamed or embarrassed to talk more directly, has promised not to tell, or for a combination of these reasons. Gently encourage the child to be more specific, within the limits of her/his vocabulary, but bear in mind that in order to make a report you do not need to know exactly what form the abuse has taken.

Disguised disclosure

- "My brother wouldn't let me sleep last night."
- "I know someone who is being touched in a bad way."
- "What would happen if a girl told her mother she was being molested but her mother doesn't believe her?"

Here the child might be talking about a friend or sibling, but is just as likely to be talking about her/himself. Encourage the child to tell you what she knows about the "other child" - it is probable that the child will eventually tell you about whom they are talking.

Disclosure with strings attached

- "I have a problem but if I tell you about it you have to promise not to tell anyone else."

Most children are all too aware that some negative consequences will result if they break the secret of abuse; if the child discloses abuse, often the offender uses the threat of these consequences to prevent a report. Assure the child you will respect her/his need for confidentiality by not discussing the abuse with anyone other than those directly involved with the legal process, who might include the school nurse or counselor, school principal, and/or the Child Protective Services investigator.

How should I respond when a child makes a disclosure?

Remember – the following are guidelines for how to respond directly to a child. These are in addition to any requirements to report the suspected abuse to the proper pastoral or civil authorities!

Below are some guidelines and suggestions for you to consider:

- Find a private place to talk with the child. If possible, have a second adult visibly present.
- Do not panic or express shock.
- Express your belief that the child is telling the truth
- Use the child's vocabulary
- Reassure the child that it is good to tell
- Reassure the child that it is not her/his fault, that she/he is not bad
- Determine the child's immediate need for safety
- Let the child know that you will do your best to protect and support him/her
- Let the child know what you will do
- Report to the proper authorities

If the child discloses during an activity where others children are involved, acknowledge the child's disclosure and continue the activity. Afterwards, find a place where you can talk with the child alone.

Of course, although it might be difficult for a child to disclose abuse, you should not be alone with the child! Following the two-deep leadership rules, place yourself in a position where you and the child can be observe at all times!

Remember, your role is not to investigate the situation. It is your responsibility to report the abuse, set in motion the process of getting help for the child, and be supportive of the child.

How can I help a child who has just made a disclosure?

Above all, be calm and do not panic!

Feelings of anger, guilt, denial, confusion are normal reactions to have. The way we respond to children will affect them. The best response is to go slowly, not to ask for too much information too quickly and *to keep focus on the child's needs*. Our goal is to lessen the trauma for the child. The ways in which adults respond to the abused child influences the level of anxiety felt by the child.

This means that the adult responding should not focus on revenge toward the abuser or his/her own guilt. Such a response will only frighten the child

The decision to report may pose personal and family conflicts. Regardless of the situation, failing to report allows the problem to continue. By reporting suspected child abuse, we not only protect the child, but it may mean the difference between a lifetime of guilt and one of healthy family relationship.

Believe the Child

Experience in treatment and reporting indicates that children seldom make up stories about abuse. Even if the story is false or exaggerated, there may still be serious family problems.

Be a Good Listener

Allow the child an opportunity to talk freely with you if he/she is comfortable, but also remember to respect the child's right to silence.

Reassure the Child

Let the child know that sharing this information with you was the right thing to do. Let the child know that you will try to keep him/her safe and to help the family. Be honest with the child regarding your responsibility to report the incident.

DO NOT PROMISE NOT TO TELL. Be careful not to make any promises about what may or may not happen.

Help Relieve the Child of Guilt

Children often believe they are to blame for the abuse. Explain that what happened was the responsibility of the adult, or the bigger child.

Be Available to the Child

For some children, the abuse may not have been traumatic, but the subsequent intervention was. The child may need your support and understanding during this family crisis.

Protect the Child's Right to Privacy

You may assume the special role of advocate for the child by reminding his/her peers or staff about the child's right to privacy.

Follow-up

Mandated reporting sources usually wonder about the results of having made a report. They can call Protective Services and find out if the case has been opened, the name of the assigned worker and if the child has been placed in a foster home. They can also ask for a report on the child's progress. However, because the family's right to privacy is very important, there may be information that the Protective Service worker will not be able to give.

Part Seven

Recognition & Appendices

Much of this material in this program and handbook has been adapted – often extensively - from the Safe Environment Program of St. Pius X/Diocese of Dallas, the Youth Protection Guidelines of the Boy Scouts of America, and the Child Abuse Prevention Handbook, California Attorney General's office. Grateful acknowledgement and recognition is given to those agencies.

Appendix A: Acknowledgement Form

Appendix B: Approved Training Courses

Appendix C: Sample Activity Information Sheet/Parental Permission Slip and Medical Information Sheets for Adults and Youth

Appendix D: Resources

Appendix E: General Ministry Application

Appendix A
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This Safe Environment manual has been prepared as a guide to assist you when working with the children and youth in Blessed Kateri Parish. The Parish reserves the right to make changes in the content or application of this manual and to implement those changes with or without notice.

I have received and agree to comply with the *Safe Environment Program for Blessed Kateri Parish* and *Guidelines for Adults Interacting with Minors at Parish, Parish School, Youth Ministry or Religious Education Activities or Events of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles*. I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the policies and procedures contained therein. I understand that this manual is the property of Blessed Kateri Parish.

Signature

Printed Name

Date

APPENDIX B

Approved Training Programs

According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, training programs should include the following components:

- A. What *constitutes* child abuse, *including* sexual abuse?
- B. What actions, procedures and policies are used to *prevent* child abuse in any form?
- C. How does an adult *identify* instances of abuse of a child, including sexual abuse?
 - What **signs** should an adult look for **in a child** who may be abused?
 - What **signs** should an adult look for **in a person** who may be abusing a child in any way?
- D. What *actions* should an adult take when they believe that child abuse, to include sexual abuse, may be occurring?
- E. What are the laws and policies regarding the *reporting* of abuse, to include sexual abuse, of children?

Training programs for *children and young people* should include age appropriate materials pertaining to personal safety. This includes information about improper touching and relationships. Children are not expected to be fully knowledgeable about child abuse or of the laws governing care of children but they need to know when they should seek assistance from a trusted adult

Office of Child and Youth Protection, USCCB, Adopted March 7, 2003

The following programs are currently authorized by the parish's SEP committee for training purposes. Additional programs that meet the above guidelines may be authorized by the SEP Committee.

FOR ADULTS:

TITLE:	VIRTUS, Excellence Builds Trust
Organization:	National Catholic Services
Catalog or ID #	Protecting God's Children
Format:	Facilitated Video
Notes:	3 hours

TITLE:	Youth Protection Guidelines: Training for Volunteer Leaders and Parents
Organization:	Boy Scouts of America
Catalog or ID #	AV-09V001A
Format:	Facilitated Video
Notes:	65 minutes long

TITLE:	Introduction to Youth Protection Guidelines: Training for Volunteer Leaders and Parents for Basic Training
Organization:	Boy Scouts of America
Catalog or ID #	AV-09V010
Format:	Facilitated Video
Notes:	25 minutes long. Intended as introductory course

FOR YOUTH:

TITLE:	VIRTUS Teaching Touching Safety
Organization:	National Catholic Services
Catalog or ID #	1-932492-07-0
Format:	Catechist Facilitated
Notes:	2 – 45 minute sessions annually

TITLE:	It Happened To Me
Organization:	Boy Scouts of America
Catalog or ID #	AV-09V011
Format:	Facilitated Video
Notes:	Designed for 6-9 year old male audience. Parent or guardian MUST be present during presentation.

TITLE:	A Time To Tell
Organization:	Boy Scouts of America
Catalog or ID #	AV-09V004
Format:	Facilitated Video
Notes:	Designed for 11-14 old male audience. Must secure parental permission before showing to youth.

TITLE:	Youth Protection:: Personal Safety Awareness
Organization:	Boy Scouts of America
Catalog or ID #	AV-09V027
Format:	Facilitated Video
Notes:	Designed for youth ages 14 – 20. Topics include date rape, internet safety, and peer sexual harassment. Must secure parental permission before showing to youth.

APPENDIX C Sample Activity Information Sheet/Parental Permission

Activity: _____

Location: _____ Phone Number: _____

Dates: From: _____ To: _____

Departure Location: _____ Departure Time: _____

Return Location: _____ Return Time: _____

Cost: _____

Special Instructions for this Activity: _____

Special Equipment for this Activity: _____

Parents: Please detach and keep the top portion for yourself. Return the bottom portion to _____ no later than: _____

(Ministry leader)

(date)

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I hereby make application for _____ a minor. I give permission for my son or daughter to attend and participate in all related activities of this event.

It is expressly understood by the parents or guardians that the member for whom this application is made is in a condition of health that warrants his taking part in this event, and that the leader(s) of these activities outing is(are) hereby granted permission to take the named member to a medical doctor for examination and treatment of any accident or illness that may arise during the term this permission.

I have completed the Health and Medical Release Form For Youth

Parent/Guardian: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____ Signed: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Contact Information:

Address: _____ Home Phone: _____

Business Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Secondary Cell Phone/Pager: _____

Other Contact Information: _____

Emergency Contact and Phone Number: In the event that the Parent/Guardian cannot be contacted:

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Phone Number: _____ Cell Phone: _____

HEALTH AND MEDICAL RELEASE FORM FOR YOUTH, Page 1 of 2

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____ Female _____ Male _____

City _____ Zip _____ Phone (____) _____

Parish: _____ City _____

Is this participant in general good health and able to participate in all activities involved in this event?

YES _____ NO _____ (If no, please submit a statement indicating limitations or serious medical conditions.)

Date: most recent physical exam: _____ Physician or Clinic: _____

Address _____ Phone: (____) _____

IMMUNIZATION HISTORY: (Please give dates)

DPT _____ DPT BOOSTER _____ TETANUS BOOSTER _____

ALLERGIES (Please write yes or no next to each)

Hay Fever _____ Asthma _____ Poison Oak/Ivy _____ Sulfa _____ Nuts _____

Penicillin _____ Bee Sting _____ Other _____

Medicines _____

If any of the above is yes, please submit a statement of how the child has been treated and with what medication. Any medication not able to be self-administered must be listed.

Operations or Serious Injuries: _____ Dates: _____ Please notify the event coordinator if this child is exposed to any communicable disease during the three weeks prior to activity.

Does the participant have any special dietary needs? If yes please list on reverse side of form.

AUTHORIZATION TO CONSENT TO TREATMENT OF MINOR

I/We, the undersigned, parent(s) of _____ a minor, do hereby authorize as agent(s) [event staff] for the undersigned to consent to any X-Ray examination, anesthetic, medical or surgical diagnosis or treatment and hospital care which is deemed advisable by and is to be rendered under the general or special supervision of any physician and surgeon licensed under the provisions of the Medicine Practice Act of the medical staff of any licensed hospital whether such diagnosis of treatment is rendered at the office of said physician or at said hospital.

It is understood that this authorization is given in advance of any specific diagnosis, treatment or hospital care being required, but is given to provide authority and power on the part of our for said agent(s) to give specific consent to any and all such diagnosis, treatment or hospital care which the aforementioned physician in the exercise of his/her best judgment may deem advisable.

I agree that in the event my child is injured as a result of his/her participation in this event, including transportation to and from such activity through the negligence (active or passive) of the Blessed Kateri Tekakawitha Parish or any of any of its agents or employees, recourse for the payment of any resulting hospital, medical or related costs and expenses will first be had against any accident, hospital, medical insurance, or any available benefit plan of mine or my spouse.

I also, give my child permission to self-medicate except for medications which are listed on the back of this form. I understand that any medications so listed will be dispensed by the Director of First Aid for the [event].

This authorization shall remain effective from [time/days of event].

Signature of parent(s)/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Emergency Telephone Number During Event (____) _____ Alternate Telephone (____) _____

Family Health Insurance Co: _____ Policy No. _____

(If possible please provide a copy of the insurance card)

HEALTH AND MEDICAL RELEASE FORM FOR YOUTH, Page 2 of 2

Child's Name: _____

Child's Birthdate: _____

Medication Name: _____

Dosage: _____

Frequency given: _____

Other Information: _____

Please list any current medical conditions:

Please list any special dietary needs:

HEALTH AND MEDICAL RELEASE FORM FOR ADULT, Page 1 of 2

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____ Female _____ Male _____

City _____ Zip _____ Phone (____) _____

Parish: _____ City _____

Is this participant in general good health and able to participate in all activities involved in this event?

YES _____ NO _____ (If no, please submit a statement indicating limitations or serious medical conditions.)

Date: most recent physical exam: _____ Physician or Clinic: _____

Address _____ Phone: (____) _____

IMMUNIZATION HISTORY: (Please give dates)

DPT _____ DPT BOOSTER _____ TETANUS BOOSTER _____

ALLERGIES (Please write yes or no next to each)

Hay Fever _____ Asthma _____ Poison Oak/Ivy _____ Sulfa _____ Nuts _____

Penicillin _____ Bee Sting _____ Other _____

Medicines _____

If any of the above is yes, please submit a statement of how the adult has been treated and with what medication. Any medication not able to be self-administered must be listed.

Operations or Serious Injuries: _____ Dates: _____ Please notify the event coordinator if this adult is exposed to any communicable disease during the three weeks prior to activity.

Does the participant have any current medical conditions? If yes, please list on reverse side of form.

Does the participant have any special dietary needs? If yes, please list on reverse side of form.

AUTHORIZATION TO CONSENT TO TREATMENT OF ADULT

I, the undersigned do hereby authorize as agent(s) [event staff] for the undersigned to consent to any X-Ray examination, anesthetic, medical or surgical diagnosis or treatment and hospital care which is deemed advisable by and is to be rendered under the general or special supervision of any physician and surgeon licensed under the provisions of the Medicine Practice Act of the medical staff of any licensed hospital whether such diagnosis of treatment is rendered at the office of said physician or at said hospital.

It is understood that this authorization is given in advance of any specific diagnosis, treatment or hospital care being required, but is given to provide authority and power on the part of our for said agent(s) to give specific consent to any and all such diagnosis, treatment or hospital care which the aforementioned physician in the exercise of his/her best judgment may deem advisable.

I agree that in the event I am injured as a result of my participation in this event, including transportation to and from such activity through the negligence (active or passive) of the Blessed Kateri Tekakawitha Parish or any of any of its agents or employees, recourse for the payment of any resulting hospital, medical or related costs and expenses will first be had against any accident, hospital, medical insurance, or any available benefit plan of mine or my spouse.

This authorization shall remain effective from [time/days of event].

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Emergency Telephone Number During Event (____) _____ Alternate Telephone (____) _____

Family Health Insurance Co: _____ Policy No. _____

(If possible please provide a copy of the insurance card)

HEALTH AND MEDICAL RELEASE FORM FOR ADULT, Page 2 of 2

Adult's Name: _____

Adult's Birthdate: _____

Medication Name: _____

Dosage: _____

Frequency given: _____

Other Information: _____

Please list any current medical conditions:

Please list any special dietary needs:

Appendix D Resources

Agencies

Child Abuse Prevention Program
Office of the Attorney General
(916) 324-7863
<http://caag.state.ca.us/cvpc>

California Child Care and Referral Network
San Francisco, CA
(800) 998-9114

Prevent Child Abuse – California
Sacramento, CA
(916) 498-8481
<http://www.pac-ca.org>

Office of Child Abuse Prevention
California Department of Social Services
Sacramento, CA
(916) 324-9100

Parents Anonymous
Claremont, CA
(909) 621-6184

Safeguarding the Children
Archdiocese of Los Angeles
(213) 637-7227

Office of Child and Youth Protection
US Conference of Catholic Bishops
(202) 541-3000
<http://www.usccb.org/ocyp/index.htm>

Assistance Ministry
Archdiocese of Los Angeles
(213) 637 7000
<http://www.la-archdiocese.org>

Publications

Child Abuse Prevention Handbook
Crime & Violence Prevention Center
California Attorney General Office
Revised January 200

Safe Environment Programs
US Conference of Catholic Bishops
Communication Office
March 7, 2003
<http://www.nccbuscc.org/comm/envguide.htm>

Charter for the Protection of Children &
US Conference of Catholic Bishops
Office of Child & Youth Protection
November, 2003
<http://www.usccb.org/ocyp/charter.htm>

I will Appoint Over You Shepherds...
Cardinal Roger Mahoney
Archdiocese of Los Angeles
February 21, 2002
<http://www.la-archdiocese.org/english/cardinal>

Youth Protection & Adult Leadership
Guide to Safe Scouting
Boy Scouts of America
November 2003, BSA Supply #34416D
<http://www.scouting.org/pubs/gss/gss01.html>

Appendix E

GENERAL MINISTRY APPLICATION

(For use where there is no specific ministry application)

The parish has the ongoing responsibility to ensure that all who volunteer or work for the parish are the best individuals for leadership roles in various ministries, and to ensure that the youth, elderly, or other vulnerable members of our parish are protected. Please help us realize this goal by completing this form on both sides, and returning it to the appropriate ministry leader as soon as possible. Thank you.

NAME:	<i>(FIRST)</i>	<i>(MIDDLE)</i>	<i>(LAST)</i>		<i>(MAIDEN)</i>
Address:		City:		Zip	
Home Phone:		Listed or Unlisted?		Cell Phone:	
Business Phone:		E-mail address			

I am interested in working in the following ministry/ministries:

I have been have been registered with Blessed Kateri Parish for approximately _____ years

I was previously a member of _____ Parish for _____ years.

I have participated in the following parish organizations or activities:

I have belonged to the following other community, business, youth-oriented or professional organizations:

Previous Residences within the past 5 years:

(Please be sure to complete and sign the reverse side of this sheet)

Social Security		Driver's License/State		Birth m/d/y	
-----------------	--	------------------------	--	-------------	--

References

NAME	Address	Phone Number	Relationship or Organization
1)			
2)			
3)			

Do you use Illegal Drugs?	Yes ___ No ___	Have you ever had your drivers license revoked	Yes ___ No ___	Have you ever been charged with child abuse or neglect?	Yes ___ No ___
---------------------------	-------------------	--	-------------------	---	-------------------

Other than minor traffic offenses, have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense? (if yes, please explain below. Please state nature of conviction, date, sentence received, and any other facts or circumstances that you wish to provide for us)

Is there any other fact or circumstance of your background that would call into question your ability to being entrusted with the supervision, guidance, or care of young people or any other vulnerable person?

By signing this application, I am affirming that

- a) I understand that Blessed Kateri and the Archdiocese of Los Angeles have a zero policy for sexual abuse;
- b) All of the information provided may be verified, if necessary, by contacting persons or organizations named in this application, or by conducting a criminal background check. I hereby release and agree to hold harmless from liability any person or organization that provides information. I also agree to hold harmless the parish of Blessed Kateri, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, and the officers, employees, and volunteers thereof; and
- c) The information contained in this application is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of applicant

Date