



CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

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Dear Parents,

Peace of Christ! I wanted to take a moment and introduce you to a new program which the Archdiocese is having every parish implement. The program is a chastity program with a special regard for safe environment. We are using the Harrisburg Program: Formation in Christian Chastity. This is, nationally, one of the most praised programs. We want you as parents to be involved in this program, and on September 27th during the parent/student orientation, we will have the materials available for all of you to look at. You will at that time have a chance to review the program, ask questions, and learn how you will be involved. I am also inserting Father Richard's bulletin article about the subject. He clarifies what the program is and why we are using it. There will also be another introductory letter sent out by September 1st, this will have more information. Also, in Father Richard's bulletin article below, there are links to the programs website. If any of you have questions about this, please contact me at any time. My contact information is above. I hope that you all have a blessed summer, and that we can stay in touch.

In Christ,

Jim Lang
DRE

Father Richard's Bulletin Article

As part of the implementation of the U.S. Bishop's document the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* (Henceforth the Charter), all parishes in the Archdiocese are required to do a series of training in order to better keep "a safe environment" for children and young people. The "safe environment" refers to minimizing the conditions that make it possible for adults to sexually abuse children and minors. It also involves learning to question and investigate unusual behavior in possible perpetrators and those who may have been abused. In short, the purpose is to foster chastity, sexual integration, and holy sexual development in children.

So far, the clergy and those who work with minor youth have completed the national VIRTUS program. Parents of children in Catholic schools and Religious education programs have been given VIRTUS materials to discuss with their children if they choose. The next step in order to implement *The Charter* is for Catholic schools and, in our case, Parish religious education programs, to have a "safe environment" component in our Catholic education. The Catholic Education and Formation Ministries (CEFM) of the Archdiocese of St. Paul/ Minneapolis has presented parishes with three programs for the different age groups to use in the classroom or "learning centers" with whole families. If parents, pastors, and religious education leaders of a particular parish decide not to use the CEFM materials, then the pastor must ask written permission from the Archbishop to use a particular program that has been shown to comply with *The Charter* in place of the CEFM programs. Basically, all of the "safe environment" programs offered only two to four class periods per year to cover this material.

After deciding for a different program from what the CEFM has offered, I wrote and received permission from Archbishop Flynn to use the "Formation in Christian Chastity" and "Safe Environment" programs used in the diocese of Harrisburg, PA. I would like for catechists to learn and offer the materials from this program to the children and young people in our religious education program beginning next fall. I think that the benefit to this program is that children are offered formation in Christian chastity in addition to the "safe environment" education. Presently, we don't have the program specifically for chastity. This is offered at each grade level. Of course, parents will have an opportunity (September 27th) to view these materials before any of the program is presented. These materials can be viewed on the internet by going to: www.hgbdiocese.org > Education > Religious Education > then scroll down to FORMATION IN CHRISTIAN CHASTITY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM. You should be able to view all of the materials we will be using.

God Bless you and have a great week,

Father Richards