

# Diocese of Rapid City

## Keeping God's Children Safe

*A Safe Faith Environment Newsletter*

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2014  
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Issue 1

### 10 Safety Lessons to Teach your Child

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Parents, it's back to school time. Children are preparing for a new year of lessons in reading, writing, and arithmetic.

They are embarking on a new year of greater independence. They will be spending more time away from home and less time under your watchful eye. For their safety, teach your children these lessons in right relationships and personal safety:

#### 1. Trust your feelings.

God created us to experience emotions for a reason. When we are faced with danger, we experience fear, preparing us to fight or flee. We experience anxiety or apprehension, at times, as a precursor, warning us in advance of pending danger. Teaching your child to notice and respond to their feelings can help them avoid danger and help you know when to take a closer look at their surroundings.

#### 2. Treat others with respect and expect respect from others.

As Catholic Christians we are called to respect all human life. We are all part of God's creation and deserving of dignity and respect. By your words, actions and interactions with your children, teach them that they are precious gifts from God. Make it clear that they are to respect others and that they are worthy of respect and dignity themselves.

#### 3. Question the motives of adults who single you out with expensive gifts, privileges, attention...

Children are born vulnerable. It is the job of adults, especially parents, to look out for the best interest of children. Make it clear to your children that, as their parents, you are the adults whom God has called to take primary care and responsibility for them. Teach your children to be wary of other adults who flood them with gifts and attention. Teach them to question "What's up?" with an adult who wants to spend most of their time with them, hangs out with them and their friends instead of other adults, buys them alcohol, or otherwise tempts them to break your rules. Teach your children to ask the questions, "What's in it for them? ... Do they have my best interest at heart?"

#### 4. Avoid going alone.

There is safety in numbers. Encourage your child to take a friend along when going out, to hang out in groups, and to spend time in places where there are trusted adults to supervise or step in if they need help.

#### 5. Know the Rules for Adult / Child Interactions.

Teach your children what a healthy adult / child relationship is. Teach them what to expect from an adult and what to question. Encourage them to tell you if an adult is breaking the rules, or pressuring them to break the rules.

#### 6. Speak up.

Teach your children to tell someone if they are feeling uncomfortable. Sometimes we think we are doing the right thing by keeping our feelings inside. But if someone is making us uncomfortable, we aren't helping anyone by keeping our feelings to ourselves. If someone cares about us,

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**USCCB Office of Child  
and Youth Protection**  
[http://www.usccb.org/  
issues-and-action/child-  
and-youth-protection/  
index.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/index.cfm)

**Diocese of Rapid City  
Safe Environment**  
[www.rapidcitydiocese.  
org/WP/safe  
environment home](http://www.rapidcitydiocese.org/WP/safe-environment-home)

### *Newsletter has changed!*

Please note: This issue is our first **quarterly** newsletter. We have changed to a quarterly newsletter format beginning in September 2014.

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they will want to know how we feel because they don't want to do anything to hurt us. If they don't care how we feel, then we need help getting out or dealing with that relationship.

**7. Know your comfort zone and expect others to respect your boundaries.**

Everyone has a different comfort zone with regard to physical boundaries. That comfort zone can vary depending on the nature of our relationship with others. Teach your children to be aware of their comfort zone. Offer some suggestions about safe boundaries. Give them some ideas of what to do if someone crosses the line.

**8. Be sure someone knows where you are.**

Reinforce to your children, that it is your job to keep them safe, but you can't protect them if you don't know where they are. Remind them, "If no one knows where you are, there won't be anyone to assist you in an emergency." Show them through your words and actions that people who care about each other, even adults, look out for each other in this way.

**9. Talk to your parents.**

Keep lines of communication open. Inquire about your child's life. Listen actively as they speak. Teach them by listening, accepting, and respecting their privacy, that they can tell you anything. Let them know that their safety is your top priority, but you can't help them if they don't tell you what is going on.

**10. Remember you have the right to say no if you feel unsafe.**

God created us, as human beings, with the ability to make independent behavioral choices. And as human beings, we don't always make good choices. Teach your children that they have the right to set limits on others' behavior if they are feeling unsafe. Help them decide if the behavior another individual is choosing to engage in is right for them. Reinforce to them that God, our creator, wants us to be safe. Teach your children when and how to say no.

***Just to let you know. . .***

During the last year we started our new Safe Faith Environment Program throughout the Diocese of Rapid City:

**Adults**—"Keeping God's Children Safe: Creating a Safe Faith Environment for Our Children"

**Children/Youth**—"Keeping God's Children Safe - A Safe Faith Environment Program, Diocese of Rapid City."

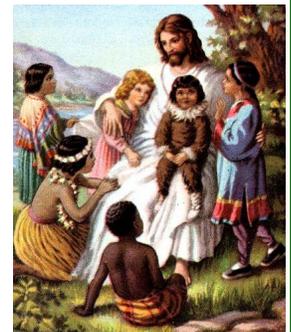
During that time, with the help of parish Safe Faith Environment Coordinators, our diocese has trained from August 2013 through June 2014:

- 4,156 Children/Youth
- 88 Priests, Deacons, and Candidates for Ordination
- 143 Administrators/Educators
- 421 Employees
- 1,047 Volunteers working with our children/youth and/or vulnerable adults

***Thank you for the gift of time, service, and yourself!***

***Prayer for Our Children***

Jesus, who invites the children to come to him,  
protect our children  
strengthen them in time of danger,  
heal them in time of sorrow  
give them laughter and delight,  
restore their innocence  
for such is the kingdom of heaven.



Jesus, who is the Good Shepherd  
enable parents to love their children well  
inspire all caregivers to protect those in their charge  
endow the clergy with great wisdom in their ministry  
as the Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep.

Jesus, who is the Light of the World,  
endow teachers with inner sight  
grant doctors skill in healing  
imbue therapists with compassion  
that they walk not in darkness, but have the light of life.

—Author Unknown

***Prevention and Mitigation of Abuse of Vulnerable Adults***

This lengthy article on the USCCB website has excellent information given with our faith's perspective for those working in this area.

[www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/resources/upload/Vulnerable-adults.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/resources/upload/Vulnerable-adults.pdf)