

TO ALL PARENTS

Religious Education

“Teaching Touching Safety” Program Overview

The job of ensuring children’s safety is a challenging undertaking. The prevention of child sexual abuse requires more than adult awareness, education and training about the nature and scope of the problem. We must also give our children the tools they need to overcome advances of someone who intends to harm them.

In accepting this responsibility, the parishes of the Diocese of Paterson provide for collaboration among parents, educators and catechists who teach in our parish religious education programs. The Catechists’ role is to assist and complete the work of the parents.

Teaching Touching Safety is a program we are using in our parish religious education programs that requires parents and other caring adults to help children learn appropriate relationship boundaries and how to protect themselves from violators. Through Teaching Touching Safety, we can empower children to respond in the best possible ways when those boundaries have been violated. Teaching Touching Safety is NOT a sex education program.

The Diocese’s Teaching Touching Safety Program Synopsis:

Children in grades 1 and 4 will be trained each year in Lesson #1 of the Virtus Teaching Touching Safety Program. There are age appropriate versions of the lesson for grades 1 and 4. Lesson One is entitled “Touching Safety Rules”. Students will learn simple rules about what to do and how to react when someone’s touch is confusing, scary, or makes the child or young person feel uncomfortable. Young people start to deal with the real risks they face when they are out in the world on their own, and they begin to learn where to draw boundary lines in relationships.

For more information, please go to the Diocese of Paterson Website, www.patersondiocese.org and click on the link for Teaching Touching Safety. You may also visit www.virtusonline.org. Any questions, please feel free to contact Joan Valk at the Diocesan Office of Child Protection at 973-777-8818 ext. 277.