



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 in the United States. These programs are 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 minors. This Code is signed when Safe Environment training is completed for the first time and then renewed on a three year cycle for all continuing employees and volunteers in the Diocese of Fresno.
- **Training programs are required for all adults** whose duties include unsupervised contact with minors (such as clergy, adult volunteers, educators, and church employees). Training should include information about child abuse prevention, identification, and the proper response/reporting of child abuse. In the Diocese of Fresno, Safe Environment Training is renewed on a three year cycle and includes education about Bullying and Cyber Safety.
- **Annual training programs for children and young people are given;** instructing and encouraging youth to be aware of their personal safety and what to do if they feel they are in an unsafe situation. In the Diocese of Fresno this training is done yearly using the "*Keeping the Promise*" resource. All children and youth enrolled in parish religious education programs and Catholic schools receive this safety education every year.
- **Background checks conducted through fingerprint clearance** are required of all clergy, employees and adult volunteers who have regular contact with minors. As long as volunteers remain active in ministry, fingerprinting does not need to be repeated---and only a picture ID is required for "LiveScan" fingerprint clearance.

Safe environment programs may also include the following:

- **Outreach to parents:** Parents are given the opportunity to receive safety education materials to reinforce and further dialogue with their child on how to recognize and respond to unsafe situations. A child's safety is very important wherever they are...at school, a friend's house, sports or club activities and even when at Church!



A commitment to creating and maintaining a safe environment is the **long-term, ongoing mission of the Diocese of Fresno**. Working together we can create a safe place for all of God's people in the Diocese of Fresno -whether you are young, old, --or in between!