



## **Creating a Safer Environment**

### **What is a Safe Environment?**

On June 14, 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) approved the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (The Charter). Article 12 of The Charter required all dioceses in the United States to establish a safe environment program. In December 2002, the USCCB approved The Essential Norms (Norms) to implement the Charter's provisions. The Norms were approved by the Vatican on December 8, 2002. They constitute particular laws for all the dioceses and eparchies in the United States of America. The purpose of the safe environment program is to help establish and maintain a safer environment for all people, especially minors (people under 18). One goal of the program is to help all adults become part of the solution to the problem of child sexual abuse in our homes, parishes, and communities. You did not cause this problem. But, when caring adults have a "healthy suspicion" about something in their surroundings, they can identify the risks to children early enough to prevent child sexual abuse from occurring.

### **How can we create a Safe Environment at St. Joan of Arc?**

Staff will periodically offer the Diocesan-approved Protecting God's Children (PGC) training sessions at the parish. All volunteers for public events, that are sponsored by the parish, where children may be present, are required to attend one session. Additionally, all parishioners are encouraged to attend the training session to help increase awareness of how the Catholic Diocese of Columbus and St. Joan of Arc keep our kids safe. In addition to attendance at one PGC class, volunteers are required to submit fingerprints for a background check. The parish will absorb the cost of the fingerprinting for parishioners if fingerprints are taken at St. Joan of Arc.

### **What do groups need to do to be compliant?**

It is the policy of St Joan of Arc that all groups who host public events where children may be present will meet the requirement of all volunteers being safe-environment-compliant. Volunteers must be at least 18 years old and must have attended a PGC class, completed the criminal background check process, and been approved by the Diocese to volunteer. After September 1, 2018, all volunteers for these public activities will need to be compliant. Please contact Director of Evangelization Paul Davis with any questions by email at [pdavis@stjoanofarcpowell.org](mailto:pdavis@stjoanofarcpowell.org).

### **What will be taught at the Protecting God's Children class?**

The PGC class is meant to create awareness of the issues and myths surrounding child sexual abuse. It is not meant to be a punishment or an accusation against volunteers. PGC simply illustrates how all adults can become part of the solution to stopping child sexual abuse through increased awareness and vigilance.

### **How to register for a PGC class and arrange for fingerprinting?**

Visit <http://www.virtus.org> to register for any upcoming class within the Diocese. To make arrangements for fingerprinting, please contact the St. Joan of Arc parish office at 614-761-0905.

### **When and where are the PGC classes held?**

PGC classes scheduled at St. Joan of Arc are held in the Social Hall. Other sessions are scheduled throughout the Diocese. Dates and locations are found once you have visited <http://www.virtus.org> and registered.

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### **Protecting God's Children Online Registration Instructions**

1. Go to [virtusonline.org](http://virtusonline.org);
2. Click on "Registration" (just below "Virtus Online");
3. Click on "View a list of Sessions" and/or "Begin the registration process";
4. Select "Columbus, OH (Diocese)" as your organization, then click "Select";
5. Create your User ID and Password;
6. Complete the form. For the primary location, please use the name of your parish (e.g. St. Joan of Arc, Powell), then click "Submit";
7. Click on Yes or No;
8. Select the role you participate in within your diocese;
9. Select any additional roles that you participate in;
10. Answer "Yes" or "No" to the questions;
11. Already attended a PGC session? Answer "Yes" or "No";
12. Select the "Protecting God's Children for Adults" session that you wish to attend. Pay close attention to the location, date, and time when making your selection (then Click "Submit Registration");
13. You will be taken to a registration verification screen. Your registration is now complete.