

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC  
**ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA**



OFFICE OF CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION

Dear Parents,

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 recognize and report / bring to light / speak up about or overcome the advances of someone who intends to do them harm.

The VIRTUS Teaching Safety – Empowering God’s Children program is a vehicle through which parents, teachers, catechists, and youth ministers give children and young people the tools they need to protect themselves from those who might harm them.

Lessons were created for four specific age groups: grades K through two, grades three through five, grades six through eight, and grades nine through 12.

The teacher materials include everything needed to prepare for and present each lesson, which also includes additional information to help teachers better understand the context of the lessons they are about to present.

The lessons are organized in a three-year cycle so each child experiences a totally different lesson each time the materials are presented and so each child receives the full range of information in small, “digestible” bites, over a three-year period. As a child advances to the next age group, there are is a completely new set of age appropriate lessons that explore the major topics in increasingly greater detail.

Children in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade are presented either one or two lessons each school year. Children enrolled in their parish’s religious education program will be presented one lesson per year – either an individual lesson or a combined lesson. Children enrolled in an archdiocesan Catholic school will be presented two lessons per year. One lesson will be presented in the fall and one lesson will be presented in the spring.

The topic for the lessons are as follows:

- Year A: Lesson 1 – Physical Boundaries: Safe and Unsafe Touching Rules  
Lesson 2 – Safe Adults, Safe Touches and Special Safe Adults
- Year B: Lesson 3 – Boundaries: You Have Rights!  
Lesson 4 – Secrets, Surprises and Promises
- Year C: Lesson 5 – Being a Safe Friend  
Lesson 6 – Boundaries: Feelings and Facts

Each lesson is founded on the principles of appropriate relationship boundaries in the broader context of Christian values. All lessons are age-appropriate, and help children and young people develop the vocabulary and boundary distinctions necessary to empower them to begin to recognize inappropriate behavior by others, while practicing appropriate relationship boundaries in their own lives. Each lesson takes approximately 45 minutes to an hour to complete.

Thank you for your partnership with the Office of Child and Youth Protection in protecting our children and vulnerable individuals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jenni Weldin".

Jenni Weldin  
Director of Safe Environment