Praesidium
Diocese of Cleveland
Expectations

The Catholic Church is taking a leading role in making organizational changes to prevent sexual abuse. These steps are ushering in a major cultural change in the United States as it filters into other areas where children gather. As Catholics, we should be proud of the leadership role the Church is undertaking in this regard.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has mandated that in addition to the excellent materials provided to teachers, coaches and child care volunteers by the Virtus Program; we (the diocese) offer information on protecting children from harm directly to children and their parents. We feel that the Praesidium Program does this in a clear, concise and comprehensive manner.

Praesidium teaches skills about boundary violations. It teaches adults how to detect warning signs and behavioral patterns of sexual abusers. It also equips children to protect themselves.

The Praesidium binder is easy to follow and contains all the information needed to deliver a comprehensive program of abuse prevention in a parish setting. It is important to deliver Praesidium consistently over the years. The more we know and teach others, the more we can prevent sexual abuse.

Beginning In the 2010-2011 school year:

1. PSR classes will use Praesidium. Grades 1-5 require three 20 to 30 minute sessions per year. These lessons can be done in one scheduled class session or spread out as best fits in the calendar/curriculum.

2. PSR classes will use Praesidium in all grades 6 and above the first year. Then use Praesidium in two selected grades each year on a continuing basis for grades 6 and above. These lessons require approximately 3 hours of time.

3. Catholic Day schools can use Praesidium as a supplement to the Health Curriculum. The concepts of Praesidium are interwoven in the health curriculum.

4. Parishes will provide at least one or more parent training sessions per year. This may include PSR and Day School parents together. More sessions can be provided if necessary.

5. Every parish needs at least one trained Praesidium facilitator to oversee the program.

6. Be prepared for disclosures of abuse. Each parish has a poster that lists the hotline number to report abuse. For further information call Sr. Laura Bouhall at: 216-696-6525 X 2060 or Sharon Minson at 216-696-6525 X 1157.

7. Know how (and teach others how) to report suspected abuse.

8. Obtain an “Opt Out Form” from the Office for the Protection of Children and Youth for use with parents who do not want their child to participate in the program.

9. It is important to document the number in attendance at each session/class for the yearly diocesan audit. Parishes should create a form for recording this information throughout the year.

   For example:

   Attendance at PSR Grade 1 _____
   PSR Grade 2 _____
   Etc.
   Attendance at Parent Meetings _____