

A young child with light-colored hair is shown in profile, blowing bubbles. The background is a soft, greenish-yellow color with many bubbles floating around. The child is wearing a blue top and a red scarf. The overall mood is joyful and innocent.

**We Are Called**

**Protecting Our Children  
from Abuse**

**Training Component A  
For use in the Diocese of  
Crookston**

*'Jesus said to his disciples:*

*"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him.*

*And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.*

*He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.*

*Then the king will say to those on his right,*

*'Come, you who are blessed by my Father.*

*Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food,*

*I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed welcomed me, naked and you clothed me,*

*ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.'*

*Then the righteous will answer him and say,*

*'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you,*

*or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and and welcome you,*

*or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and and visit you?'*

*And the king will say to them in reply,'*

*'Amen, I say to you,  
whatever you did for one of the least  
brothers of mine, you did for me.'*

- MT 25: 31-46

Our concern for the safety of children and young people, not to mention the vulnerable, may be and should be placed within the framework of the “themes of Catholic social teaching.”

The first of these themes, given in the document called “Faithful Citizenship,” is the “life and dignity of the human person.” Every human person is created in the image and likeness of God. The conviction that human life is sacred and that each person has inherent dignity is central to our teaching. The measure of every institution, including our Diocese and its parishes, as well as other entities, is whether or not it protects and enhances the life and dignity of the human person, including of course children and young people.

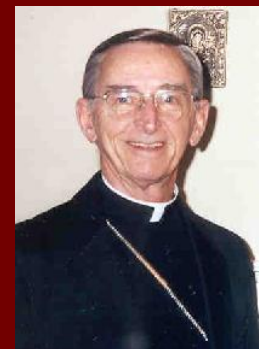
Another theme of our social teaching concerns rights and responsibilities. To apply this to our subject matter for today, children and young people, because their persons are holy and sacred, have a right to be protected from physical and sexual abuse, and they have a right to be taught, in an age-appropriate way, about how to recognize danger and safeguard themselves from harm. And we who exercise authority have a duty to respect and uphold these rights of minors.

A third theme is our option for the poor and vulnerable. Who, in a sense, is more poor and more vulnerable than children and young people? The younger, the poorer; the younger, the more vulnerable, the younger, the more helpless; the younger, the more exposed to harmful activity by predators. But even those who are about to leave their status as minors, are very vulnerable to clever manipulators who prey on them for sexual gratification.

A fourth, and the final theme I will mention, is solidarity. John Paul II said in his encyclical on social concerns that “we are all really responsible for all.” We are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, and in a special way we are the keepers of our younger brothers and sisters. So it is in solidarity as a diocese that we must work to protect them from any kind of abuse, including sexual abuse.

These, then, are the main faith-based reasons why our Catholic Church, which has suffered because of some horrendously scandalous activity by some of our church personnel, is now taking a leadership role in protecting children and young people. I thank you in advance for your participation in these efforts.

- Bishop Victor H. Balke  
Bishop of Crookston



# Instructions for Completing Component A

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- To complete the Safe Environment Training required for employees and volunteers who wish to serve in a capacity involving children, please carefully review these materials.
- Following your review, you will need to complete the Training Test, either by printing a copy, indicating your answers on the printed test, and returning the completed test to the Safe Environment Coordinator;
- Or, by completing the test online by clicking on the link and following the instructions provided. If you take the test online your results will be processed immediately and a copy of your test will automatically be forwarded to the Safe Environment Office.
- **Please note that with either option it will still be necessary for you to complete an 'Acknowledgment and Consent Form', which must be returned to your parish.** These forms can be downloaded from <http://www.crookston.org/sep/bc/Forms/forms.html>.
- When the diocese has received your test and you have been cleared through the background check process, a certificate will be issued indicating that you have completed the Safe Environment requirements. Once you have received this certificate you may begin your service.

# Objectives of Component A

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**The first step in helping abused or neglected children, and in preventing other children from being abused or neglected, is learning to recognize the symptoms of abuse and neglect.**

**The goal of Component A is to help you to recognize warning signs that a child is being abused, and identify some possible characteristics of someone who might abuse or neglect a child.**

**Component A will also provide you with instruction as to how you should act if you know or suspect that a child is being abused.**



# What is Child Abuse?

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- Child abuse consists of any act, or failure to act, that **endangers a child's physical or emotional health and development.** Someone is abusive if he or she fails to nurture the child, physically injures the child, or relates sexually to the child.



# What is Child Abuse?

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- The four major types of child abuse are:
  - Physical abuse
  - Emotional abuse
  - Sexual abuse
  - Neglect

According to Minnesota State Law, child abuse means an act that involves a minor victim and is a violation of law. A minor, according to the legal definition, is an individual under 18 years of age.

# What is Physical Abuse?

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- **Physical abuse is the injury of a child as a result of aggression.** Even if the injury was not intended, the act is considered physical abuse. Some examples are:
  - Beating, slapping, or hitting
  - Pushing, shaking, kicking, or throwing
  - Pinching, biting, choking, hair-pulling
  - Burning with cigarettes or other hot objects
  - Severe physical punishment

# Physical Punishment vs. Physical Abuse

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- **Physical abuse** is an injury resulting from physical aggression. **Physical punishment** is the use of physical force with the intent of inflicting bodily pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control. It is very possible, and in some cases very easy, for physical punishment to get out of control and become physical abuse. **Physical punishment should never be used in the parishes or schools of the Diocese of Crookston.**

# Some signs of physical abuse in children

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- To recognize physical abuse, look for **clusters** of the following physical and behavioral symptoms:
  - Burns, bite marks, cuts, bruises, or welts in the shape of an object
  - Resistance to going home
  - Fear of adults

# What is Emotional Abuse?

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- **Emotional abuse is any attitude, behavior, or failure to act that interferes with a child's mental health or social development.** Types of emotional abuse vary from verbal insults to extreme forms of punishment
- Emotional abuse may also be described as
  - Verbal abuse
  - Mental abuse
  - Psychological abuse

# Examples of Emotional Abuse

- Yelling, screaming, threatening, frightening, or bullying a child
- Humiliating the child, name-calling, telling a child he or she is 'no good', etc.
- Showing little or no physical affection
- Confinement to a dark room or closet, or otherwise terrorizing a child
- Causing a child to witness violent behavior, including the physical abuse of others



# Signs of Emotional Child Abuse

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- A child may be experiencing emotional abuse if he or she frequently exhibits a combination of the following symptoms:
  - Apathy, depression
  - Hostility
  - Difficulty in concentrating

Emotional abuse is almost always present when another form of abuse is found, and its effects are often more long-lasting than any of the other forms of child abuse.

# What is Sexual Abuse?

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- **Sexual abuse occurs when an adult involves a child in some form of sexual activity. This activity may include:**
  - An adult fondling a child's genitals or forcing a child to fondle the adult
  - Penetration, including sodomy
  - Forcing a child to undress or spying on a child in a bathroom or bedroom
  - Performing sexual acts in front of a child, or exposing oneself to a child, telling 'dirty' stories, or showing pornography to a child
  - Oral sex
  - Exploiting a child through child prostitution or child pornography

# Signs of child sexual abuse

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- Inappropriate interest in and knowledge of sexual acts
- Overcompliance or excessive aggression
- Fear of a particular person or family member, or of a particular place
- Having symptoms indicating evidence of physical traumas to the genital or anal area.
- Experiencing a loss of appetite or other eating problems, including unexplained gagging.
- Regressing to behaviors too young for the stage of development they already achieved.

**Remember, no single sign should be taken as proof of abuse. You should look for clusters of physical and behavioral symptoms before you begin to suspect abuse!**

# Child Sexual Abuse Online

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- In addition to the traditional forms of child sexual abuse, predators have also begun using the internet to target and perpetrate abuse against children.

# Warning Signs of Online Sexual Abuse

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- The U.S. Department of Justice has identified the following as signs of Online Child Sexual Abuse:
  - Your child spends large amounts of time online, especially at night
  - You find pornography on your child's computer
  - Your child receives phone calls from people you don't know, or is making calls, sometimes long distance, to numbers you don't recognize
  - Your child receives mail, gifts, or packages from someone you don't know
  - Your child turns the computer monitor off or quickly changes the screen on the monitor when you come into the room
  - Your child becomes withdrawn from the family
  - Your child is using an online account belonging to someone else

# Neglect

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- Unlike other forms of child abuse, neglect is a crime of omission- the failure to do something. An adult who is guilty of neglect will have a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs. A single instance of neglect may not be considered child abuse, but repeated neglect certainly is abuse.

# Examples of Neglect

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- Physical

- Failure to provide food, clothing appropriate for the weather, a home that is hygienic and safe, medical care, and/or adequate supervision

- Educational

- Failure to enroll a child in school, or allowing excessive absences from school

- Emotional

- Failure to provide emotional support, love, and affection. This can also include a failure to provide psychological care if needed.

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- Neglect is a very common type of child abuse. In fact, the Child Welfare Information Gateway indicates that more children suffer from neglect than from sexual and physical abuse combined. At the same time, many victims of neglect are never identified.

# Signs of Child Neglect

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- Clothing unsuited to the weather
- A child who is frequently dirty or unbathed
- Extreme hunger
- Apparent lack of supervision



# Causes of Child Abuse

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- No one has been able to predict which factors will cause a person to abuse a child. However, a significant number of people who abuse children were abused themselves as a child. Also, not all forms of abuse result from a deliberate intention to harm the child. In some cases ignorance and isolation are a factor, and at times abuse can also result from cultural traditions that emphasize the child as being the 'property' of the parent. **Whatever the cause, child abuse must stop!**

# Other Factors that Might Cause a Person to Abuse a Child

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- **Stress**, including the stress of caring for children, especially those with disability, special needs, or difficult behaviors
- **Lack of nurturing qualities** necessary for caring for a child
- **Difficulty controlling anger**
- **Personal history of being abused**
- **Isolation** from the family or community
- **Physical or mental health problems**, including depression and anxiety
- **Alcohol or drug abuse**
- **Personal problems** such as marital/relationship difficulties, unemployment, or financial difficulties

# Other Indicators: Grooming

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- Individuals who sexually abuse children and young people often use a technique called 'grooming' to gain the trust of the child. 'Grooming' in this sense is nurturing a friendship with a child through bonding, such as by giving the child gifts, taking him or her on special outings, and showing him or her special attention. 'Grooming' is an important technique to be aware of because once a child trusts an adult, the adult can influence the child's attitude towards sexual behavior.

*So, what can you do if you know or  
or even suspect that a child is a  
victim of abuse?*

*While serving in the ministry of the Church (as a  
member of the clergy, an employee, or a  
volunteer) you have the responsibility to respond!*

# Safe Environment Policy for the Diocese of Crookston

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- 5.1.1 Persons who are obliged by the law of the State of Minnesota and the Diocese of Crookston to report suspected sexual abuse of minors to civil authorities must carry out this duty. Reporting to Church authorities does not excuse any person from this obligation, except as may be allowed by civil law.
- We ask our volunteers, when working with children in our parishes and schools, to make this same commitment to our children's safety.



# How to Report Suspected Abuse:

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- If you do not know the telephone number of the local Child Protection Agency or law enforcement office, dial 911.
- A listing of county social services agencies can be found on the webpage of the Minnesota Department of Human Services ([www.dhs.state.mn.us](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us))
- You can also report suspected child abuse by calling the National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-4-A-CHILD
- If you know or suspect that child sexual abuse is taking place online, you can also call the Cyber Tip Line: 1-800-843-5678

# Reporting:

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When considering whether you should report abuse that is known to you or which you suspect, please remember that you do not need proof; suspected child abuse is sufficient reason to make a report to the proper authorities. By doing so, **you may save the life of a child!**

However, it is also important to realize that no one sign or indicator discussed in these training materials should be seen as evidence of abuse. You should look for a cluster of signs, or a pattern of symptoms and behaviors.

# Don't Be Afraid to Report

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- You may be afraid to report suspected child abuse because you fear repercussions for the child or yourself. But, please note:
  - The possible child abuse will be investigated before any action is taken, including removing the child from the home.
  - Even if you are a mandated reporter, reporting can be anonymous. Your identity is protected unless you consent to the disclosure.
  - You are immune from liability for any report made in good faith.

# In addition to reporting to civil authorities

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## **Safe Environment Policy of the Diocese of Crookston**

- 6.1.1 When clergy and diocesan and parish or school personnel and volunteers file a report with civil authorities concerning sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric or one of the diocesan or parish personnel or a volunteer, the Moderator of the Curia is to be notified within twenty-four (24) hours and, if possible, supplied with a copy of the written report.

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- More detailed information about reporting suspected or actual abuse can be found in Article Five of the policies and procedures of the Diocese of Crookston, available at your parish or on the diocesan website ([www.crookston.org](http://www.crookston.org)).

# WE ARE CALLED to Protect our Children!

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Thank you for reviewing  
the training materials.

To complete your training, please  
complete the Training Test

# Sources

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- US Department of Justice
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Child Welfare Information Gateway
- HelpGuide.Org
- Praesidium, Inc.