

A young girl with blonde hair is shown in profile, blowing bubbles. The background is a soft, greenish-yellow color with many bubbles floating around. The text is overlaid on the upper left portion of the image.

We Are Called: Protecting Our Children From Abuse

Training Component B
For use in the Diocese of Crookston

'See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father'

-Mt 18:10

In the previous training material I discussed the framework of Catholic social teaching according to which we should understand our efforts to protect children and young people as well as other vulnerable persons among us.

With this component, Component B, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that abuse, including the sexual abuse of children and young people, has spiritual effects as well as behavioral, emotional, and physical ones. The spiritual effects of having been abused can include having a distorted image of God, a decreased desire to love due to the victim's experience of love being accompanied with hurt and shame, and a feeling of being unworthy of love which is brought about by the victim's misplaced sense of blame for what happened. At its worst, the spiritual effects of abuse can result in the victim rejecting God, his/her faith, and his/her Church. As you can see, the victim's suffering due to the abuse he or she has experienced directly impacts his or her ability to receive the message of Christ communicated through the Gospels.

With all this in mind, I ask all of you to be aware of the signs of abuse, and to be vigilant in your efforts to report abuse when you know or have reasonable cause to suspect that it is occurring. The purpose of the materials before you today is to help you be aware of the procedures for reporting actual or suspected abuse of minors. I thank you in advance for your participation in these efforts.

Bishop Victor H. Balke
Bishop of Crookston





Training Component B

Receiving Disclosures and Reporting Abuse

Instructions for Completing Component B

- 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.

The Purpose of Training Component B is to instruct you in
identifying:

- Ways that a child or young person may attempt to disclose abuse
- How you should respond to disclosures of abuse
- The proper way to report actual or suspected child abuse

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR WILLINGNESS TO
PARTICIPATE IN THIS IMPORTANT
TRAINING!**

Remember, there are

Four Kinds of Child Abuse

- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse



Statistics about abuse that you should be aware of:

- Abuse, including sexual abuse, occurs in all age groups and across all cultural and economic groups.
- One out of every four girls and one out of every eight boys will experience sexual abuse before the age of 18.
- In 2006, 7000 children in Minnesota were abused or neglected; 48 suffered life-threatening injuries, and 19 died of maltreatment. The median age for the victims was six years old.

*What you need to know about
a child who needs to tell...*



Disclosing Abuse

- When seeking to disclose abuse- in other words, to 'tell a trusted adult'- a child or young person may be hindered by a variety of factors that result in a tentative form of telling



Tentative telling...

- The child or young person may
 - Lack the appropriate vocabulary to make the disclosure
 - Feel ashamed or embarrassed
 - Have been told not to tell
 - Have been threatened by the perpetrator with bad consequences for themselves or family members if they told
 - Be testing the adult to see if they will be believed

Consequently, a child or young person attempting to disclose abuse might attempt to do so through...

■ Indirect hints

- 'My brother wouldn't let me sleep last night...'
- 'My babysitter keeps bothering me...'
- 'Mr. Smith has funny underwear...'
- 'My mom says that spanking will toughen me up...'

Or through...

- Disguised disclosure
 - 'I have a friend who was touched in a bad way...'
 - 'What would happen if a girl told her mother that she was molested and her mother didn't believe her?'
 - 'Have you ever heard of a kid being left outside in the cold when it was dark outside?'

If you believe that a child or young person is attempting to disclose abuse to you...

There are several things that it is important that you do, and several that it is important that you DO NOT do.

What can I do?

- It is important that you communicate the following things to the child or young person
 - **IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT**
 - I believe you
 - I am glad that you told me
 - I will try and help you
 - Abuse is wrong and we take reports very seriously

What should I **NOT** do?

- It is important that you **DO NOT**
 - Ask the child if he or she is telling the truth
 - Promise the child that you will not tell anyone else
 - Criticize the abuser, as it may be someone the child cares about
 - Express shock or panic

How to report abuse

that has been disclosed to you



While serving in the ministry of the Church (as a member of the clergy, an employee, or a volunteer) you may have the experience of being told of abuse that has occurred or have suspicions of abuse of a child or vulnerable person. You have the responsibility to take appropriate steps to respond.

What you should do:

- Write down your observations. If you suspect an act of abuse has occurred, if you actually witnessed abuse, or if someone tells you that they were hurt:

Carefully note

- Any outward physical signs that you see
- Any changes in behavior
- Things that the child or vulnerable person has said
- Any additional information about what happened

Reporting Abuse to Civil Authorities



How to Report Suspected Abuse:

- 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)
- 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:

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

- 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.

State Law:

From *Current Minnesota Statutes* (2005 edition): Chapter 626.556

Subd. 3. **Persons mandated to report.** (a) A person who knows or has reason to believe a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused, as defined in subdivision 2[1], or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years, shall immediately (as soon as possible and within 24 hours) report the information to the local welfare agency, agency responsible for assessing or investigating the report, police department, or the county sheriff if the person is:

State law (cont.)

- (1) a professional or professional's delegate who is engaged in the practice of the healing arts, social services, hospital administration, psychological or psychiatric treatment, child care, education, correctional supervision, probation and correctional services, or law enforcement; or

State law (cont.)

- (2) employed as a member of the clergy and received the information while engaged in ministerial duties, provided that a member of the clergy is not required by this subdivision to report information that is otherwise privileged under section 595.02, subdivision 1, paragraph (c)[1].

State law (cont.)

Section 595.02, subdivision 1, exempts clergy from reporting information received during confession.

State law (cont.)

- (b) Any person may voluntarily report to the local welfare agency, agency responsible for assessing or investigating the report, the police department, or the county sheriff if the person knows, has reason to believe, or suspects a child is being or has been neglected or subjected to physical or sexual abuse.

State law (cont.)

Subd. 7. **Report.** An oral report shall be made immediately by telephone or otherwise. An oral report made by a person required under subdivision 3 to report shall be followed within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays, by a report in writing to the appropriate police department, the county sheriff, the agency responsible for assessing or investigating the report, or the local welfare agency, unless the appropriate agency has informed the reporter that the oral information does not constitute a report under subdivision 10. Any report shall be of sufficient content to identify the child, any person believed to be responsible for the abuse or neglect of the child if the person is known, the nature and extent of the abuse or neglect and the name and address of the reporter.

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- To assist employees and volunteers in reporting suspected abuse to the civil authorities, the Diocese of Crookston has a standard reporting form available on the diocesan website or at your parish.

http://www.crookston.org/sep/index_files/Page939.htm

County Social Service Agencies

■ Becker	218-847-5628
■ Beltrami	218-333-8300
■ Clay	218-299-5200
■ Clearwater	218-694-6512
■ Hubbard	218-732-1451
■ Kittson	218-843-2689
■ Lake of the Woods	218-634-2642
■ Mahnomen	218-935-2568
■ Marshall	218-745-5124
■ Norman	218-784-5400
■ Pennington	218-681-2880
■ Polk	218-281-3127
■ Red Lake	218-253-4131
■ Roseau	218-463-2411

The Safe Environment Policy of the Diocese of Crookston

Diocesan Safe Environment Policy

- The policies and procedures for the protection of children and young people in the Diocese of Crookston reminds clergy and employees of our Catholic parishes and schools that we are mandated reporters. When working with our children in our parishes and classrooms, we also ask our volunteers, not mandated by law, to make the same commitment to keep these sacred young people safe.

Diocesan Safe Environment Policy

- 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.

In addition to reporting to civil authorities:

- 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, school 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.

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).

WE ARE CALLED to Protect our Children!



To complete the Safe Environment requirements, please return to the website and click the link for the Test for Component B.

Once you have completed the test, your results will be forwarded to the Safe Environment Coordinator.

Thank you.