

The Call

The Called to Protect™ Newsletter

April 2007

Issue 2

Inside this Issue

Making a Difference	1
Best Practices	1
Timely Tips	2
A Theological Perspective	2-3
Reader's Corner	3

Program Update...

Called to Protect™ for Young Children

The movie scripts are in the final stages of development with our child abuse prevention team of experts. We plan to begin shooting the videos this summer.

Please stay tuned for more information...

Praesidium
624 Six Flags Drive
Suite 110
Arlington, TX 76011
Office: 817.801.7773
Toll-free: 800.743.6354
www.PraesidiumInc.com

PRAESIDIUM
Our passion. Your protection.



The future starts today, not tomorrow.

Pope John Paul II

During spring, we celebrate the wonder of life. Let us take this opportunity to renew our commitment to protecting the precious lives that surround us—those of our children, youths, and vulnerable adults.

We share this commitment with you. Please call and let us know how Praesidium can help you meet the challenges of your essential ministry.

Making a Difference

*We gratefully honor
Mary Fran Horton
of the
Diocese of Kansas City
-St. Joseph*

*Thank you for all
you do!*



Nominate someone in your diocese who is making a difference! Submit a one-paragraph description to thecall@PraesidiumInc.com.

Best Practices

Electronic Communications

Develop Policies that Govern Electronic Communications

Reinforce that your diocesan code of conduct applies to all forms of interactions—both in-person and electronic—with children and young people in your programs.

Define “electronic communications” broadly enough to include e-mail, instant messaging, text messaging, social sites such as myspace.com or facebook.com, and any other form of electronic communication.

Develop a System to Monitor Electronic Communications

All communications that occur between staff or volunteers and minors should be as public as possible.

For example, many organizations prohibit staff from giving minors their personal e-mail addresses. Instead, all staff must use an e-mail address at the organization that can be monitored at any time by administrators.

Many companies require that staff or volunteers “cc” their supervisors (or even the child’s parents) on any e-mail correspondence to minors in their programs.

Following best practices relating to electronic communications will encourage everyone to be appropriate at all times. Although federal and state laws provide limited protection to employee communications, employers should draft carefully worded policy statements that explain how they intend to monitor communications.

Please share with us the topics you would like to hear more about and we will address them in upcoming issues.

Timely Tips

Boosting Session Attendance

A challenge that continually faces us, as we reach out to train parents, volunteers, educators and others who come in contact with children, is low session attendance.

Here are some suggestions for ways to boost session attendance within your parishes and schools:

1. Make it easy for people! Encourage nearby parishes to offer Called to Protect™ sessions on different days at different times.
2. Provide child care, or offer concurrent sessions for parents to attend while their kids are being trained.
3. Advertise Called to Protect™ sessions! Publish reminders in your parish bulletins, distribute flyers, send e-mail reminders, and make verbal announcements at related events.
4. Offer sessions during other events such as retreats, new employee training, volunteer orientation, or parent meetings throughout the school year.
5. Emphasize the importance of parents and children sharing a common language about abuse. Called to Protect™ provides this language.
6. Encourage parish clergy and ministers to promote and talk about the Called to Protect™ sessions.
7. Host a Bring-a-Friend session. Allow attendees to bring a friend who is not a Church member.
8. Provide refreshments. If you are hosting an evening session, provide hors d'oeuvres. Prepare veggie trays or boxed lunches for mid-day sessions.
9. Reach out to your diverse faith community. Consider offering sessions in other languages, like Spanish.
10. Remind adults that in less time than it takes to watch a movie, they can learn valuable new skills about child protection.

Our next issue's Timely Tips will focus on how to present the Called to Protect™ program in one session, for instance during a one-day retreat.

A Theological Perspective:

The Basis for Prevention of Child and Youth Abuse

Father Hugh Gillespie, SMM
St. Mary Gate of Heaven Parish
Diocese of Brooklyn

One of the most common questions that arises in programs such as Called to Protect™ for Youth—both from the young people to whom it is presented as well as from those who have been entrusted with presenting this material—is “What does this have to do with religion?” Because this question is so common and also because it is an important question, it is well worth spending a few moments to consider it before proceeding onward to the core material of the program. While there are a number of elements of the Catholic tradition that connect quite strongly to the content of this program, five of those elements have a connection that is particularly strong.

First, the Gospel demands that we as a Church do all that is in our power to protect those who are vulnerable from harm whenever it is possible to do so. Our young people, for all that they have to offer for the good of our communities, are also among the most vulnerable members of the Church and of society as a whole. Given the tremendous harm that sexual abuse can inflict upon a young person, harm that can wound a young person not only as it occurs but whose effects linger throughout the rest of his or her life, the Catholic Church must do all that it can to see to it that our young people are protected and that they have the knowledge required to protect themselves.



Second, the Gospel insists that our faith in Jesus Christ empowers us to make a difference in the world around us. Sexual abuse is a problem that affects every level of society and all ethnic and economic groups. Our parishes and schools serve not just Catholics but also the people of the neighborhoods in which they are found. By creating a safe environment in our schools and parishes, and by instructing our young people and their parents on the realities of sexual abuse and predatory behavior, we make a difference not just for ourselves but in the wider social world in which we live.

Third, the Catholic Church has always insisted upon upholding the truth that the Gospel proclaims concerning the sacredness and the dignity of all human lives. Sexual abuse is a violation of this dignity, and those young people who lack a solid sense of the true value of their own lives are very vulnerable to being victimized by predatory and exploitative behavior. Conversely, by helping our young people to recognize their true dignity as children of God and the true value of their lives, the Church can provide them with a solid defense

against many of the things that can trap them in abusive situations and relationships.

Sexual abuse is a violation of this dignity, and those young people who lack a solid sense of the true value of their own lives are very vulnerable to being victimized by predatory and exploitative behavior.

to short-circuit our decision making. The moral tradition of the Church encourages us to take a deep look at how we make our choices and which impulses have a tendency to govern our actions. This is not only to make certain that our actions are not sinful, but also to help us to recognize when our actions might allow us to be manipulated or might place us at risk.

Fifth, our lives are relational. Everyone's life takes place in a web of relationships—family, friends, work, school, teammates, etc. The Gospel is also lived out and expressed through our relationships. It is within these relationships that our lives are strengthened and affirmed, and it is also within these relationships that our lives can be greatly damaged if any of them are abusive. Learning the signs that indicate a relationship is not healthy and how to tell the

difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships is a necessary skill that all of our young people need to develop as they begin to make adult decisions for themselves.

An additional issue that is often raised in the context of a program such as this is whether or not this program is designed to impart Catholic teaching on sexual morality. *It is not.*

This is a safe environment program that is designed to instruct our young people in the realities of abusive relationships and situations and give them the tools to defend themselves against such things. As such it is not intended to be a sexual education course. This is not to say that Catholic teaching on sexual matters has no bearing on this program. It should be a relatively straightforward matter, in fact, to use this program as a supplement to certain elements of a sexual education program and vice-versa, in much the same way that it can be used to supplement a class in more general morality. However, given the limited nature of this program and the specific focus of its material, it is by no means a comprehensive presentation of Catholic doctrine in the area of sexuality. Nor should it be. The strength of this program is its focus, and that focus is upon the safety of our young people and the program should not be expected to include elements that stand outside of this area of focus. Sexual morality, like other elements of the Catholic tradition, should be presented to our young people in a course designed to do that systematically and effectively, just as this program seeks to be systematic and effective in the task of helping us to create a truly safe environment for our young people.



Learning the signs that indicate a relationship is not healthy and how to tell the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships is a necessary skill that all of our young people need to develop as they begin to make adult decisions for themselves.

Reader's Corner

"How was Praesidium started?" — Susan from Ohio

Dear Susan,

In the early '90s, our CEO was serving on the board of directors of a local organization when a nine-year-old child was sexually abused by a program volunteer. Because he had 10 years of experience as a child psychologist working with sexually abused children, the board asked our president what could be done to prevent such a tragedy from happening again. He enlisted the help of three colleagues to develop a solution.

The team spent several years compiling and analyzing all available research in pedophilia and

the prevention of sexual abuse in organizations; completed root cause analyses on more than 3,000 cases of abuse in hundreds of organizations; and developed an empirically based model to guide the assessment of risks in organizations and strategies to reduce or eliminate them. Praesidium was incorporated in 1992.

Since then, Praesidium has worked with more than 2,000 clients nationwide, including churches, schools, YMCAs, child care centers, camps, insurance companies, and social services and residential care organizations.

Do you have a question for Praesidium? Please send us an e-mail at info@PraesidiumInc.com.

God's way is perfect.

All the Lord's promises prove true.

He is a shield for all who look to Him for protection.

Psalm 18:30