

SAFE Creating Our Faith Environment

Not Our Compliance, but our Calling

When you think about Safe Environment efforts in our Church you probably think about compliance with policies and procedures designed to keep children safe from harm and compliance with the USCCB *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. From the perspective of our faith environment, the focus is not on compliance, but on our calling. As Catholics we are called to respect the life and dignity of every human person from conception to natural death. The *Charter* guides us in action to our calling. Our calling furthers the Gospel message of Christ.

Not Retribution, but Reverence

When we are bogged down with the requirements of a safe environment program or when we linger on the costs of healing and prevention efforts, we may be tempted to say, “That’s not my problem. I am not an abusive adult. I didn’t cause past abuse.” From a faith perspective however, we see these efforts as a matter of looking out for the needs of others – their healing, safety, support and respect. As Christ said, “Whatever you do for the least of my brothers you do for me.”

Not Managing Risk, but Modeling Right Relationships

Safe environment strategies are more than “risk management,” focusing on the actions to reduce the risk of abuse, to reduce further damage to our children and our Church. They are an integral part of our faith environment and involve modeling Christ, creating for children the kind of loving relationships that Christ teaches about in His gospel message. Every protective message we give to children, from noting their unique and special creation, their dignity as a person, and true meaning of love in relationships furthers the Gospel message of Christ.

Not Merely Programs, Policies, and Procedures, but Who and How We Are

When we think about safe environment strategies in the context of our faith environment we realize that our efforts are more than a program with requirements to be checked off on a list. Healing those who have been harmed, preventing abuse, and modeling right relationships are an inherent part of *who and how we are with children and youth*.

For More Information contact the Diocesan Child Protection Office cpo@gidiocese.org or (308)382-6565 or contact your Parish / School Safe Environment Coordinator