



Roman Catholic
Diocese of Tucson

Office of the Bishop

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July 2, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Bishops' Charter for the Protection for Children and Young People; Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal, has been in effect for a little over 16 years, and I would like to recap the efforts to maintain a safe environment for all who worship, work, and participate in our diocese. Moreover, I am happy to announce and introduce a new curriculum for training called "Circle of Grace." The Archdiocese of Omaha has developed the curriculum providing this valuable resource to our diocese. I am grateful to them for their efforts in creating and subsequently introducing this comprehensive program to us.

As a component of the Safe Environment Education Program of the Diocese of Tucson the "Circle of Grace[®] curriculum" will assist religious educators and youth ministers with this task. "Circle of Grace" contributes to the protection of our children and youth and affirms their importance in the life of the church. Additionally, we rely on our parents to be the first and primary teachers of their children in all things, including how to keep themselves from being victimized by those who would do them harm – this new component will help them too.

It is vital that we never become complacent in our efforts to do all we can to keep our children safe. *Circle of Grace* provides the tools to begin critical conversations with our children, as it provides materials for parents to discuss with their children of all ages. This training is offered in our religious education and Catholic school classes.

The Diocese of Tucson has safeguards and reporting protocols in place to guarantee proper behavior among our clergy, employees, and volunteers. Our *Guidelines for the Prevention of and Response to Sexual Misconduct* this includes the *Code of Conduct for all who minister in the Diocese of Tucson*, are reviewed and updated periodically. These requirements include a criminal background investigation and foundational safe environment training before anyone is cleared to work with minors in our diocese. Adults are required to attend the *Fulfilling the Commitment to Heal and Protect* orientation, with ongoing renewals, every three years provided through videos and live presentation, discussing topics of abuse relevant to our work in ministry. These requirements are put in place to ensure that we are providing safe and secure environments for children to grow in their Catholic faith. Furthermore, to assess compliance with the Bishop's Charter, we undergo an annual audit by an independent auditing firm. The most recent audit in 2017 praised the Diocese of Tucson as exemplary in exceeding and meeting the audit requirements.

As part of our Safe Environment Program, we instruct our clergy, employees, and volunteers how to receive reports of sexual abuse; we have in place a Victim's Assistance Coordinator who responds promptly when an allegation is received and cooperate with law enforcement. Moreover, our Diocesan Review Board, comprised of experts in the fields of mental health, law enforcement, and the legal profession stand ready to advise me when an allegation is made.

I am most grateful for the hard work done in the parishes and schools to ensure that all of the mandates of the Bishop's Charter are effectively implemented. I am also grateful to the thousands of volunteers who have been so gracious in their cooperation with these requirements. Without their generous stewardship of time and talent, we would not have the resources to facilitate the programs in our parishes.

I am also grateful to all of you whose dedication to the Catholic education of our children has allowed us already to have reached so many children with personal safety education. I am confident this curriculum will be beneficial in furthering our efforts in teaching our young people.

And so, by this letter, I hereby promulgate, as official diocesan policy, the protocols, new curriculum, training of the Diocesan Safe Environment Programs as of this date July 2, 2018. This letter supersedes all previous letters of promulgation.



Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *Edward J. Weisenburger*
Most Reverend Edward J. Weisenburger
Bishop of Tucson

Katherine R. Rhinehart
Katherine R. Rhinehart, Chancellor
Diocesan Notary