

Protect and Heal Parent Declination

The Charter requires that children and youth be provided the opportunity to participate in abuse recognition and resistance training each year. The Diocese of La Crosse requires that each school and religious education program notifies parents and guardians of the following:

- Date and time for each grade-specific training session;
- The right of parents/guardians to refuse permission for their child(ren) to participate in the training;
- That children and youth will participate in the training session unless a signed, written refusal is received from the parents/guardians.

The Diocese of La Crosse also requests:

- Parents/guardians are notified prior to training by either mailing to their home prior to training or notification of training is published in the parish bulletin or school newsletter.
- As parents/guardians you are invited to be present for any and/or all of the training sessions for children and youth.

Catechetical leaders may wish to include a copy of the Protect and Healing Training. All signed, written parental refusals must be kept on file at the parish with other Safe Environment documents.

Below is a sample notification. It should be printed on parish or school letterhead.

Letter Head

Date:

Dear Parent or Guardian:

(Name of parish/school) will be presenting Protect and Heal Safe Environment Lessons to all children enrolled in (school or religious education program name). This training is offered in response to the mandates of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People: Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal. The Protect and Heal Program was developed by the Diocese of La Crosse by the Office of Catechesis and Office of Youth Ministry as its curriculum to help keep our children safe.

This training will help your child recognize unhealthy relationships, appropriate ways to reduce the likelihood of being abused, and how to get help from others. Most importantly, this information will be presented to your child in a manner that reinforces his/her value as a person

created in the image and likeness of God deserving of love and respect. Everyone, especially children, deserves a safe environment to learn and worship.

Your child's training session will be held on (date & time of session) at (location).

Each child will be Safe Environment trained unless the enclosed Diocese of La Crosse Declaration form is completed and returned. It is important for us to have your signed consent or refusal on file. Emailed or phoned responses are not acceptable. Please note that if we do not receive this form back by (date), we will allow your child to participate in the training session.

Sincerely,

Signature (Name of Pastor or Catechetical Leader)



DIOCESE OF LA CROSSE

SAFE ENVIRONMENT STUDENT TRAINING DECLINATION



The Diocese of La Crosse provides Safe Environment training **from the Catholic perspective** to participating individuals in its programs.

The substance and focus of Safe Environment Training is as follows:

Kindergarten-Second Grade: Students will learn about their **dignity** (their incredible worth) as **children of God** and the respect that each person deserves as a child of God. Students will learn about safety, safe environment and the care that is to surround them, the difference between appropriate, kind actions and behavior that makes them feel safe, secure and loved, and inappropriate, harmful actions and behaviors that makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

Grade Three-Five: Students will learn about the virtue of **respect**, which is based upon the **dignity of each human person**. Students will learn the importance of saying “no” to inappropriate, harmful actions, behavior and touch that makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Children will be encouraged to tell immediately a trusted adult when these situations arise and will learn about the buddy system.

Grades Six-Eight: Students will learn about how each person, including themselves, must be treated with **respect**. Students will learn about, and seek to develop or further develop, the virtue of **prudence**-making good decisions. Students will learn practical tips for keeping themselves safe and will discuss defensive and assertive body language to protect themselves.

High School: Students will understand virtue, which are **good moral habits**, and vice, which are bad moral habits. Students will discuss the virtue of **chastity** and **modesty**; learn practical steps for protecting themselves and others from sexual abuse, including the ability to recognize warning signs and how to react to abuse and to the possible threat of abuse.

I acknowledge that the Diocese of La Crosse has offered my child Safe Environment education by the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and by the Safe Environment Program of the Diocese of La Crosse. As the parent or guardian of the child listed below, I am declining the training and do not want my child to participate in the Safe Environment Program.

My reasons for opting out are: _____

Children's Names _____

School/Parish _____ System/City _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Please return this form to your school/parish office