



Diocese of Austin

Office of Ethics and Integrity in Ministry

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Dear parents of middle and high school students in the Diocese of Austin:

As Catholics, we believe that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God. Each of us is sacred and our lives — body, mind and soul — should be treated with respect. *Called to Protect for Youth* is our dioceses' Ethics and Integrity in Ministry component for middle and high school students, providing sexual abuse education and practical prevention tools in language and a medium they can understand, to realize this fundamental teaching of our faith.

The Diocese of Austin requires each parish and Catholic school to present *Called to Protect for Youth* to their 6th and 9th grade students, and those new to the parish/school since the last program offering, every school year. CTPY is presented at two different grades/ages due to the maturation that occurs over those years; students are expected to attend in both their middle school and high school years. You will be notified of the scheduled date(s) by your student's teacher/catechist/youth minister a few weeks prior to CTPY. Although students are not "required" to attend, CTPY in order to participate in ministry as youth helpers, the importance of this program is critical in our shared goal to protect youth. CTPY should be actively promoted by your parish or Catholic school; it should not be considered optional. Students that cannot attend should have a valid reason for their absence.

Called to Protect for Youth is not human sexuality education. It is best described as safety education. Students will watch a series of 3 DVDs and participate in activities that explain boundaries and ways they might be violated, ways they can address boundary violations and how/with whom to talk about boundary violations and abuse.

As the first educators of our children, parents have the responsibility to teach them all sorts of things. However, sometimes we don't have the knowledge, understanding or comfort level to discuss more difficult topics. For some, sexual abuse prevention might fall in that category. The CTPY program can be a starting point for this important family discussion. There is a link to information about CTPY on the EIM page of the diocesan website austindiocese.org/parent.

Minors wishing to volunteer in "helper roles" at the parish or school, including serving in liturgical ministries, are encouraged to attend the CTPY program so they will have information and tools that will assist them in be safe and successful in all aspect of their lives. Minors should not complete an EIM Application for Ministry, nor are required to attend the EIM Workshop, until they have turned 18 years old.

Please contact the EIM office with questions. Thank you for working with us to help keep all children safe from preventable harm.

Sincerely,

Emily C Hurlimann, LCSW
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