

*St. Thomas of Canterbury  
Catholic Church*

January 17, 2012

Dear Parents,

I would like to encourage you to attend a parent meeting to introduce you to this year's Safe Environment Program that we will be using with our religious education program. This meeting will take place on Tuesday, January 24, at 7:15pm in Becket Hall. (immediately following CM gathering prayer)

As you may know, Bishop Patrick J. McGrath, in accord with the United States Bishops' *Charter and Essential Norms for the Protection of Children and Young People*, has mandated that all parishes teach the VIRTUS Safe Environment lessons to all children who are registered in religious education, Kindergarten-12<sup>th</sup> grade.

For purposes of this program, "safe environment" refers to teaching children how to keep themselves and others safe and free from harm at all times. The program focuses on personal, social and cyber safety. This program provides age appropriate activities, handouts, and language.

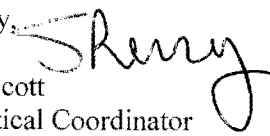
At the parent meeting you will have the opportunity to hear the material that will be presented and ask questions. If you, as a parent (or guardian), decide that you do not want your child to participate in the VIRTUS Safe Environment program, you may complete an "opt-out" form to that effect. Unless and "opt-out form is signed prior to the lessons, we will assume that you are consenting for your child(ren) to take part in the lessons. The presentations will be held as following:

- For Early Childhood: Sunday, Feb 12, 9-10am
- For grades 1-4: Tuesday, January 31, 4-5:15pm
- For grades 5-8: Tuesday, January 31, 7-8:15pm
- For Confirmation candidates: Sunday, February 5, 10:15-11:30

Alternately, if you prefer to present the materials to your child(ren) at home, we will be happy to provide you with the DVD, lessons and handouts on a check-out basis.

I look forward to seeing you at the parent meeting. If you will be unable to attend the parent meeting or have any questions, please let me know as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

  
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Catechetical Coordinator  
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