



## **Inservice of Religious Education Students**

**ALL Religious Education students, Preschool – Grade 12, are to be inserviced annually for Child Protection beginning with the 2007-2008 catechetical school year. This inservicing is to be completed by the end of March each year.**

**Please email [kstreett@eriercd.org](mailto:kstreett@eriercd.org) the scheduled inservice dates for Religious Ed students by October 15<sup>th</sup> of each catechetical year.**

### **Rationale for Annual Inservicing**

Teaching children and youth skills and strategies to protect themselves is a critical task and one that necessitates awareness of proven educational techniques. It is a well-known fact that repetition improves learning. There is also evidence that learning usually proceeds gradually. For instance, a cardinal rule of thumb in advertising is that potential customers usually need to see the name of a product seven times or more before they're motivated enough to even think about making a purchase.

There is evidence to suggest that if children and youth are presented with age-appropriate information regarding safe environment and protection; they become more comfortable discussing such issues. Some are even proud of knowing the material offered in our programs. Comfort and pride help empower children to protect themselves and/or report incidences of abuse.

The USCCB has indicated that the mandated child protection inservicing of children and youth has resulted in more children coming forward to report cases of inappropriate behavior on the part of adults. More importantly, the children coming forward no longer feel a sense of shame about incidents; they know that the abuse was not their fault.

With this information and experience in mind, the diocese requires that all children and youth be presented age-appropriate inservice programs each year.

### **Erie County**

The Crime Victim Center of Erie County is not able to provide their services to the Religious Education programs in Erie County with their current staffing. Therefore, inservicing will be accomplished by use of the approved videos/DVDs from the Diocesan Media Resource Library for all parishes in Erie County. Lesson plans/guides are provided. The list of approved videos/DVDs can be found at <http://www.eriercd.org/pdf/approvedvideos.pdf>. Please schedule early with the Media Resource Library; there is no charge for the use of these programs. The parish is asked to pay return postage when necessary.

## Counties in the Diocese other than Erie County

The county service agency that will do this inservicing for you (at no charge) is listed on the diocesan web page at <http://www.eriercd.org/pdf/county.pdf> or you may use the approved videos/DVDs. Even though these agencies do not charge for their services, it would be appropriate and much appreciated by the agency if parish programs are able to make a small donation to cover the cost of their handout materials and travel.

## Process for Inservicing and Parental Option Forms

1. Contact the local agency in your county and use the age-appropriate diocesan lesson outline and prayer service, which can be found on the diocesan Child Protection website page.

OR

Use the diocesan approved video/DVD programs, found at <http://www.eriercd.org/pdf/approvedvideos.pdf> with the age-appropriate diocesan lesson outline and prayer service, which can also be found on the diocesan Child Protection website page.

OR

Determine if inservicing is done in the public school system. (see next topic)

2. Advise all parents (except for inservicing done in public school) that Child Protection inservicing will be conducted. Advise parents who do not want their child to participate in the program to call you or the Religious Ed Office so the child may be excused from the group the day the inservice is presented. This notification can be easily accomplished by adding the following statement to the Religious Education registration form: *The Bishops of the United States have mandated that all students be inserviced each year in the area of Safe Environment/Child Protection. This inservicing will be held during the course of this catechetical year. If you prefer that your child does not participate in this program, please sign below and your child will be excused from the group when the program is presented.*

3. The parent(s) of any child who is absent or whose parents have refused the child's participation in the on-site inservice must receive the diocesan *Parent Training Packet* along with a *Parental Option Form*. Ask parent(s) to return the completed option form to the parish religious education leader. Inservicing **MUST** be offered on site; inservicing all students by solely sending the *Parent Training Packet* home is **NOT PERMITTED**.

Option forms listing "refusal" as the reason for the child's absence are to be sent to the diocese with the *Annual Parish Report for Child Protection Compliance* which is due in June.

## Inservicing at the Public School

Inservicing for safe environment in the students' public school is acceptable and students do not require repeat inservicing. Documentation from the public school or county agency that performed the inservice must be provided to the parish, listing the school, school district, date and presenter of the inservice. Copies of this documentation will be kept on file as record of student inservicing.

## Religious Education in a Home-Based Model

If parish Religious Education is provided using a home-based model, the *Parent Training Packet* and the *Record of Student Inservicing for Home Based Religious Education Students* must be mailed to the students' homes for child protection inservicing by the parents. The completed forms must be kept on file at the parish. Documentation of the numbers of parents who received information and returned forms must be submitted on the *Annual Parish Report for Child Protection Compliance* as students inserviced.

## Information and Forms

The information and forms needed for compliance are on the diocesan web page at <http://www.erieecd.org>. Please select ***For the Protection of Children*** from the list of boxes on the left hand side of the page and scroll down to find the information/forms needed.

## Documentation

The parish must have documentation to show that the parish was not negligent in providing each and every student with safe environment inservicing, as evidenced by one of the following:

1. Record of attendance at a Safe Environment inservice (parish or public school district)  
OR
2. The date that training information was given to parents and the Signed *Parental Option Form*.  
OR
3. Notation of date that information was mailed to parents of children in home-based programs and the returned, signed *Record of Student Inservicing for Home Based Religious Education Students*.

The *Child Protection Student Inservice Record – Religious Education* is an **OPTIONAL** form to use if desired. If the **same information** can more easily be generated using a computer program, that is acceptable. As long as the necessary documentation can be produced and information submitted on the *Annual Parish Report for Child Protection Compliance*, the format of the form is not critical. These forms or records are to be kept on-site at the parish and not sent to the diocese. This documentation is to be kept confidentially and indefinitely.

Parishes will receive a form, the *Child Protection Compliance Annual Report*, in the spring of the year. For this audit, parishes will be asked to submit the following statistics regarding student inservicing:

1. Total number of Religious Education students enrolled, Preschool - Grade 12
2. Number of students inserviced on site.
3. Number of students not inserviced on site and inserviced by parents.  
Copies of *Parental Option Forms* listing "refusal" as the reason for absence must be submitted to the diocese with the *Annual Parish Report for Child Protection Compliance*.
4. Number of students trained by parents in home-based programs (listed as students inserviced.)

It is expected that the numbers of students listed in #2, #3, and #4 would equal the total number of students listed in #1.