

## PRINCIPLES FOR CHILD PROTECTION CATECHESIS

1. God is love, therefore, each person is made in the image of love and created to act in love. Our bodies are sacred and holy.
2. Family, in God's image, respects and cherishes the uniqueness and life of each of its members. God lives in a family or community which we call the Blessed Trinity. Persons are created to live in community, the smallest and most intimate of which is family. The church and school are partners with families in educating, nurturing, and protecting children.
3. Each person has dignity and must be treated with respect. We show our respect for each other in our language, behavior, and interactions with each other. Caring and concern and empathy for each other must be the hallmark of our lives as followers of Jesus. Because of the dignity of each person, our right to respect includes the right to privacy, especially privacy of our own bodies.
4. Touch is an integral part of being human. Touch can be safe, or it can be unsafe or unwanted. Safe touch, appropriate physical affection, is that kind of touch which is good for the person's body, makes one feel cared for, loved and important. Unsafe and unwanted touch makes a person feel uncomfortable and unhappy.
5. God has blessed every person with the gift of choice. Some bad choices affect a number of people negatively. Suffering caused by bad choices is never the will of God and is not the fault of innocent persons.
6. Some actions or behaviors are wrong. Some actions or behaviors between adults, between adults and children, and between children are wrong. Behavior that harms self or others physically, psychologically, emotionally, or spiritually is wrong.
7. There are good secrets and bad secrets. There is good play and bad play. We can share good secrets and good play experiences and we must avoid bad secrets and bad play experiences.
8. Good and loving human relationships and friendships can help us to understand ourselves, God and others. Some people misuse friendship and harm others.
9. Every person has the right to be safe. Children have the right to be protected from anything and anyone who may harm them. Adults have the responsibility to make the environment in which children live as safe as possible. That includes teaching children and young people proper and adequate coping and safety skills which enable them to be safe and healthy.
10. Parents and teachers have the responsibility to assist children and young people to identify a number of people in their lives to whom they can talk openly and honestly.

## **EDUCATIONAL GOALS**

1. To establish an understanding that **God made all people good and the majority of the people in the world have responded to God's call of goodness.** These people are caring individuals who will protect youngsters.
2. To teach students how to identify and thwart the lures that are used to lead youngsters from a safe environment into one where they are vulnerable to exploitation and other crimes. **Include prayer in this training - asking God to keep them safe.**
3. To teach students that sexual abuse and harassment are against the **laws given to us by Jesus** as well as against the common law.
4. To advise students that drug use is not only **spiritually**, physically and psychologically harmful, but that it increases their vulnerability to sexual assault and other crimes.
5. **To teach students the safety precautions when using the internet.**
6. **To continue to help the children find the Christ in one another and to treat one another as Jesus would.**
7. To ensure students that society, **their school and their church** has the legal and moral obligations to protect their safety through enforcement of the laws of God and the laws of the land.
8. To encourage students to rely on a combination of critical thinking, instincts and **trust in God's care for them** to help protect themselves.
9. To nurture in each child **how wonderful God has made them and how to find the Christ in each one of their classmates.**
10. To encourage parents to continue talking with their children and thus play an active role in the personal safety education of their children.
11. To promote disclosure of any type of abuse or threat to a youngster's safety and well-being.
12. **To teach children how to turn over any feelings of guilt and blame often felt by victims of abuse to the Lord knowing that the Lord always loves them.**

## EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

1. Children are close to the heart of Christ. "Unless you become as a little child - you cannot enter the Kingdom of heaven." Let the children come to me.
2. Create and relate the life's experience of children to our gospel values and the teaching of the church. It is on this foundation that a Christ centered education can be built.
3. The Lord has blessed each child with mental abilities and capabilities that are powerful and creative.
4. Children are trusting and endowed with amazing survival instincts that come from their Father, the Lord our God. We teach them the joy and peace that comes from trusting in the love and care of the Father.
5. Through the gift of parenthood-parents become the first educators of their children... .when parents are centered in the Lord - so are the children.
6. We need to pray each day for our children asking the Lord to protect them from addiction to drugs and alcohol.
7. "Let the children come to me" - even when Jesus was tired - He was never too tired for the children - they are close to His heart.
8. Our schools and communities need to continue working on building communities of faith and keeping Christ as the center so as to ensure safety and peace in our schools.
9. Children (we) are made in the image and likeness of God. We need to continually instill this into our children - God doesn't make junk.