



**DIocese OF AUSTIN**  
**ETHICS AND INTEGRITY IN MINISTRY OFFICE**  
**MEMORANDUM**

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**TO:** PASTORS, DRES, YOUTH MINISTERS, PRINCIPALS  
**FROM:** HELEN OSMAN  
**SUBJECT:** CALLED TO PROTECT FOR YOUTH PROGRAM  
**DATE:** 7/28/2006

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Beginning this fall, all Catholic schools and parishes are required to include in their curriculum the Called to Protect for Youth program. This program has been developed specifically for Catholic middle school and high school students by Praesidium, the same company that has worked with Catholic dioceses in developing the Protecting God's Children program. Many of you participated in preview sessions on this program in the spring of 2006, and 10 sites were part of the pilot phase of the program.

Your parish or school may schedule a program by going to the following Web page:

<http://www.austindiocese.org/dept/eim/youth.php>

Once a trainer has been confirmed for your session, you will be provided with additional material through the diocesan Web site to assist you in having a successful session. We realize that this is a new program for almost everyone, so we expect it to grow and evolve over time. I would appreciate any recommendations or insights that you may have to improve!

Please find attached a brief overview of the program. Much more information will be provided as you schedule your sessions.

If you have questions regarding this program, please contact me at 512.697.2047. It was very well received in our pilot sites; I believe that you will find it a tremendous addition to your programs.

Thank you for all that you do to nurture the faith and formation of our young people.



# Called to Protect...for youth

**Target audience:** sixth through ninth graders

Program format:

**Schools:** three, one-hour class sessions, integrated into regular class curriculum, preferably in health/life sciences. This is NOT part of the human sexuality or religion curriculum. If the school has more than one section of a grade, all sections will be combined, with the teachers overseeing small group discussions based on their individual classes.

**Parishes: three options**

**Note: in all three options, the students' regular catechists must be available for the entire program.**

**1. Three, one-hour class sessions, integrated into regular class curriculum.** *The sessions are not to replace the catechetical curriculum, but can replace social events scheduled.* The RE program can also begin earlier or end later to accommodate the inclusion of the new program.

If the parish has more than one section of a grade, all sessions will be combined, with the catechists overseeing small group discussions based on their individual classes. *These sessions may or may not meet at the regularly-scheduled class time, depending upon space and personnel resources at the parish and with the EIM Office.* (i.e., large parish with five sections of sixth grade classes may have to schedule sessions for all sixth graders at one time, to accommodate trainers, equipment, etc.). If the sessions are combined, it is strongly recommended that the parish plan for each trainer to have no more than approximately 50 students (with their accompanying catechists) at one time. Two or more trainers can be assigned to a parish to accommodate large numbers, as long as the parish has rooms and equipment to allow multiple presentations at one time.

**2. Four-hour retreat format, with all sessions scheduled on one day with a break.** Again, the ratio of trainer to students should be no more than one to 50, and catechists must be available to facilitate small group discussion. This session would most likely be held on a Saturday or Sunday.

**3. Smaller parishes may wish to combine and use Option 2,** mindful of the ratio of one trainer to 50 students.

Other logistics to consider:

- **The program is mandatory.** This will require parishes to provide advance notification to parents regarding scheduling, to maximize attendance. Parents not wanting their children to attend may sign a waiver form to opt out of the program. The U.S. Conference will require us to verify attendance with attendance records and a signed letter from the pastor. If the program is not offered at regularly scheduled class times, promptness by the students must be stressed, especially to the parents.
- Only trained personnel provided by the diocese can present the program.
- A parents' presentation can be made before the students receive their training. Parents need to be aware that they are welcome to observe the program, but the program is not intended for younger children and they should not be present at the time of the sessions (childcare should be found for them). Trainers suggested that parish staff greet the students and parents at the door and direct them to appropriate areas, so that parents do not sit with their students, but in the back of the room.
- It is recommended that presentations be limited to 50 students at a time. In addition, the students' regular teachers or catechists must also be present to facilitate the small group discussions.